

**ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**MUSIC IN TRANSIT:  
MUSICAL PRACTICES OF THE CHALDEAN-IRAQI MIGRANTS IN  
ISTANBUL**

**Ph.D. THESIS**

**Evrin Hikmet ÖĞÜT**

**Department of Music**

**Music Programme**

**MARCH 2015**



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**GEÇİŞ HALİNDE MÜZİK:  
İSTANBUL'DAKİ KELDANİ-İRAKLI GÖÇMENLERİN MÜZİK PRATİKLERİ**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>ASAM</b>   | : Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants                 |
| <b>ICTM</b>   | : International Council for Traditional Music                                 |
| <b>IS</b>     | : The Islamic State   |
| <b>KASDAR</b> | : The Chaldean-Assyrian-Syriac Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Organization |
| <b>LGBTI</b>  | : Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex                            |
| <b>ORSAM</b>  | : Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies                                 |
| <b>UN</b>     | : United Nations  |
| <b>UN/ECE</b> | : The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe                           |
| <b>UNHCR</b>  | : United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees                               |
| <b>US</b>     | : United States   |





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## **MUSIC IN TRANSIT: MUSICAL PRACTICES OF THE CHALDEAN-IRAQI MIGRANTS IN ISTANBUL**

### **SUMMARY**

Starting with the Gulf War in 1991, there has been a mass emigration from Iraq that gained speed following the 2003 invasion, eventually reaching four million people. Even though not all of those fleeing were Christians, as religious minorities, the Christian communities constituted some of the ethnic groups who were severely affected by the ongoing situation in the country.

Among the countries that millions of asylum seekers and refugees from Iraq have gone to, Turkey has functioned as a transit country for many Christian Iraqis on their way to their destination points, mainly the US, Canada, and Australia. Due to various parameters of the bureaucratic process, this period can vary from six months to several years. Istanbul is among the most preferred cities for the Chaldean-Iraqis as it provides the services of various religious organizations and has an existing immigrant network consisting of former migrants from the same region.

This study takes a multi-dimensional look at the musical practices of the community, including the sacred-secular, performance-listening, and professional-amateur features of them. In regards to the musical practices, the differentiations between the permanent and temporary migration constitute the core of the study. In this respect, while pointing out these differences, I discuss the applicability of the theoretical framework of the migration studies in ethnomusicology that focus on the permanent migrant communities and their musical production.

The methodology used in the study is a long-term fieldwork project between 2011 and 2014 that includes participant observation as a musician and the other technical features of ethnographic methodology, such as interviews, depth interviews, et cetera. The fieldwork process also includes some interviews with the Chaldean-Iraqi migrants who migrated through Turkey to their final destination cities, including Houston, and New York, US; Toronto, Canada; Baabda, Lebanon.

The sacred and secular musical practices of the community are considered in these contexts:

The Chaldean-Iraqi community is considered to be a highly religious community. In addition, being a religious minority both in the homeland and in Istanbul makes the religious practices indispensable for the community members, especially in this difficult and uncertain phase of their migration. Thus, beyond the dichotomy of preservation and integration, the continuity of the church music performances is one of the main concerns of the members.

The significance of the religious practices gives those young members who perform religious music respectability in the community. In this context, the study takes

musical abilities as cultural capital in a Bourdieuan sense and examines its effects on the creation of hierarchical relationships.

Among the secular musical practices of the community are the listening and performance practices of the young members. These musical preferences are considered through the lens of self-representation and the flexibility of identity, which is formed again and again in respect to the other. The listening preferences and the musical genres/styles that are chosen for dance are discussed in the context of the reciprocity of the identity formation processes. The listening practices cannot be considered without the mediation of music among the Chaldean diaspora networks, of which the young members in Istanbul see themselves as a part

In the case of secular musical performance practices, the vocal performances of young members in the community gatherings constitute the main examples. The most common feature of these performances is the choice of songs that express the psychological effects of war and displacement.

In the light of this data, the study finds that depending on various economic and cultural reasons, unlike permanent migration, transit migration does not provide a fertile environment for the new and hybrid musical forms. And the products and the musical practices of the focus community are shaped by and reflect the particularities of this phase of migration.

## GEÇİŞ HALİNDE MÜZİK: KELDANI-IRAKLI GÖÇMENLERİN İSTANBUL'DAKİ MÜZİK PRATİKLERİ

### ÖZET

Irak'ta son on yıllarda sürmekte olan savaş ortamından ve özellikle 2003 yılında gerçekleşen işgal sonrasında Hristiyanlara yönelen saldırılardan etkilenen Iraklı-Keldani Katolikler, aralarında Türkiye'nin de bulunduğu komşu ülkelere giriş yaparak mülteci statüsü almak ve üçüncü bir ülkeye yerleşmek için Birleşmiş Milletler'e başvuruda bulunmakta ve resmi işlemlerinin tamamlanmasını bekledikleri bu süreçte transit göçmenler olarak ikinci ülkelerde belirsiz bir süre geçirmektedirler.

Bu belirsiz süre 6-8 aydan birkaç yıla kadar uzarken, başta çalışma izninden ve sosyal güvenlikten yoksunluk olmak üzere, dil ve dini inanç farkı gibi bariyerler topluluğun bu geçici süreyi güçlü bir yabancılık ve belirsizlik hissi içinde geçirmelerine neden olmaktadır.

Esasen, İstanbul, Ankara gibi büyük şehirlerde değil, gönderildikleri uydu kentlerde (Yalova, Sivas, Bilecik vs.) kalmaları öngörülen bu göçmenler, gerek Keldani kilisesinin ve göçmenlere destek olan diğer dini organizasyonların, gerekse daha önceden aynı sebeplerle, aynı bölgeden göç etmiş akraba ve tanışların oluşturduğu sosyal ağların sağlayacağı olanaklardan yararlanabilmek için tüm imkanlarını seferber ederek İstanbul'da kalmaya çalışmaktadırlar. Resmi kayıtların belirsizliğinin yanı sıra sürekli geliş ve gidişlerle sayıları değişmekte olan bu topluluğun İstanbul'daki nüfusunun iki bin ila beş bin arasında değişkenlik gösterdiği söylenebilir.

Bu çalışma, söz konusu topluluğun İstanbul'da geçirdikleri süre zarfında gerçekleştirdikleri müzik pratiklerini çok yönlü bir şekilde (dini-din dışı, icra-dinleme, amatör-profesyonel) incelerken, topluluğun geçiciliğini merkeze alarak, bu geçiciliğin topluluğun müziksel etkinlikleri üzerindeki etkilerini ele almaktadır. Çalışma bu bağlamda, geçici ve yerleşik göçmen topluluklarının müzik pratikleri arasındaki farklara dikkat çekerken, etnomüzikoloji disiplini içindeki göç çalışmaları literatürünün yerleşik göçmen toplulukların müzik pratiklerinin incelenmesi üzerinden vardığı sonuçların geçici göçmen topluluklara ne düzeyde uygulanabileceğini de tartışmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle bu çalışmayla, bir örnek topluluk özelinde, etnomüzikoloji literatüründe gözden kaçmış görünen transit göç kavramı gündemleştirilmektedir.

Çalışmada benimsenen metodoloji, İstanbul'da ikamet eden Iraklı-Keldani göçmenlerle 2011-2014 yıllarında üç yılı aşkın bir süre katılımcı gözlem yoluyla gerçekleşen bir alan çalışmasını ve etnografik metodolojinin görüşme, derinlemesine görüşme gibi diğer yöntemlerini kapsamaktadır. Alan çalışması sürecinde İstanbul'dan ayrılarak Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Avustralya'daki nihai yerleşimlerine göç eden göçmenlerle yapılan online görüşmeler ile özellikle dinleme

ve m zik paylařma pratiklerinin incelenmesi ise e-fieldwork ya da netrografi olarak adlandırılabilir. online etnografik y ntemlerin kullanımını gerektirmiřtir. İstanbul'da yapılan alan  alıřmasına ek olarak Amerika Birleřik Devletleri'nde New York ve Houston, Kanada'da Toronto ve L bnan'da Baabda řehirlerinde yařayan Iraklı Hristiyanlarla yapılan g r řmeler de transit ve yerleřik g   arasındaki farklara iliřkin kısıtlı da olsa g zlem yapma ve veri toplama olanađı vermiřtir. Houston'da g r ř len Keldani-Iraklıların daha  nce İstanbul'da transit g  men olarak kalmıř ve kısa s re  nce ABD'ye g  m ř olmaları T rkiye'den    nc   lkeye g    dođrusal řekilde izleme olanađı verdiđi i in  zellikle  nem tařımaktadır.

Kilise korosuna eřlik eden bir m zisyen olarak katılımcı g zlem yapılan s re  boyunca kayıt altına alınan kilise ilahilerinden se ilmiř olanlar  alıřmaya ek olarak CD formantında sunulurken,  alıřmanın ekler b l m nde bu ilahilerin yalın birer transkripsiyonu yer almaktadır. Ekler b l m nde  zel bir kilise ayinine iliřkin etnografik anlatıya yer verilerek koronun prova-icra s recinin betimlenmesi ama lanmıřtır.

 alıřma, etnom zikoloji literat r nde g    alıřmalarına atıf yapmakla birlikte, bu alandaki kısıtlı transit g   literat r n n bir deđerlendirmesini de i ermektedir.

 alıřmada dini ve dindıřı m zik pratikleri ařađıdaki bađamlarda ele alınmıřtır:

Keldani-Iraklı topluluđunun genel olarak dindar bir topluluk olarak tanımlanmasının yanı sıra, hem anavatanda hem de İstanbul'da dini azınlık durumunda olması, g   n  zellikle bu zorlu ařamasında dini pratikleri ve dini ađları  nemli hale getirmektedir. Bu bakımdan, kilisede d zenli bir koro icrasını m mk n kılmak  yeler i in birincil bir  nem tařımaktadır.

Bu  alıřma, merkezinde yer alan Keldani-Iraklı topluluđun, diaspora topluluklar  zerine yapılan  alıřmalarda ileri s r ld đ  gibi, kendi k lt r n  koruma ve yeni k lt re entegre olma ikiliđi dıřında bir eđilimi benimsediđini ve tek temel gayesinin ge ici g   s recinde devamlılıđı sađlamak olduđunu ileri s rmektedir. Dini m zik pratiklerini de bu  er evede okumakta; bu bakımdan, gerek repertuarın s rekli bir yenilenme i inde olması, gerekse transit  lkede yapılan kilise m ziđi icrasında k lt re yabancı m zisyenlere yer verilmesi topluluđun bilin li ya da kendiliđinden geliřtirdiđi stratejiler olarak deđerlendirilmektedir.

Dini rit elin topluluk a ısından  nemi, kilise korosunda dini m zik icrası ger ekleřtiren gen   yeleri topluluk i inde saygın bireyler haline getirmektedir.  alıřma bu bađlamda, m ziđe iliřkin beceri ve bilginin Bourdieuc  anlamda k lt rel sermaye olarak hiyerarřik iliřkilerin inřası bakımından  stlendiđi rol  de ele almaktadır.

Topluluđun  alıřmaya konu edilen din dıřı m zik pratikleri ise  zellikle gen   yelerin dinleme alıřkanlıklarını ve topluluk eđlencelerinde ger ekleřen amat r vokal icralarını kapsamaktadır. Bu m ziksel pratikler,  z-tems il  er evesinde, yine g   n bu spesifik evresinde  teki ile kurulan iliřkiler bađlamında tartıřılmakta ve dinleme tercihlerinin  eřitliliđi ya da deđiřkenliđi ile  z-tems il s re lerinde  ne  ıkarılan kimlik unsurları arasında bađlantı kurulmaktadır. Topluluđun dans pratikleri de aynı řekilde, kimliđin  ok y nl l đ ne vurgu yapar. Gen lik eđlencelerinde bir yandan  ađdař pop ler t rlerin dinlendiđi ve bunlar eřliđinde dans edildiđi g r l rken, hemen her topluluk eđlencesinin halk ezgileri eřliđinde yapılan kolektif danslarla tamamlanması, bu iki m zik/dans t r n n vurgu yaptđı farklı kimlik belirte lerinin eř zamanlı ya da ardıl olarak kullanılması ve birinin nihai



olarak tercih edilmesi açısından dikkat çekicidir. Yine dinleme pratiklerinin gözlemlenmesi, öteki ile paylaşılan, ötekine gösterilen kimliğin neliğine dair bir fikir de oluşturmaktadır.

Dinleme pratiklerinin, özellikle genç göçmenler söz konusu olduğunda müziğin online paylaşımından ve dolaşımından ayrı düşünülmemeyeceği görülmektedir. Keldani-Iraklı gençlerin müzik paylaşımlarının incelenmesi, bu gençlerin kendilerini aynı zamanda dünyanın pek çok bölgesine yayılmış geniş bir Keldani diasporasının bir parçası olarak görmekte olduklarını ve gerek anavatan, gerekse üçüncü ülkelerdeki Keldani ağlarıyla sürekli bir ilişki içinde olduklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Müzik bu ilişkinin kolaylaştırıcısı ve vaz geçilmez bir unsuru olarak görülmektedir.

Müzik icrası söz konusu olduğunda dikkat çeken vokal performanslarda, genel bir eğilim olarak savaş ve yerinden edilmenin yarattığı duygusal dünyanın müziksel olarak ifade edildiği görülmektedir. Tezde Rap müzik üzerinden örneklendiği üzere, gençler kendi ürettikleri müzikal örneklerde de bu temaları tekrar etmektedirler.

Çalışma, sunulan veriler ışığında, yerleşik göçmen topluluklarında gözlemlenen yeni ve melez kültürel/müziksel türlerin geçici göç sürecinde oluşmadığı görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, nüfusun son derece kısıtlı olduğu; piyasa ilişkilerinin ve buna bağlı aracı kurumların oluşmadığı; dil bariyeri, dini inanç farkı ve yasal statünün kırılabilirliği nedeniyle yerel halkla ilişkilerin görece olarak kısıtlı olabildiği ve belki de en önemlisi, göçmenin belirsizlik hissiyle kuşatıldığı transit göç sürecinin müzik pratiklerini de kalıcı göçten farklı bir biçimde şekillendirmekte olduğu ve/veya tüm bu öznel koşulların etkilerinin müzik pratikleri üzerinden okunabileceği ileri sürülmektedir.



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The Objective and The Scope of the Project**

The relationship with music and migration has been one of my interests in ethnomusicology for a long time. This interest was stimulated by the expanding literature on the migration studies in the discipline, as well as my personal contacts with some migration solidarity networks and individual immigrants. Believing that “academia” is not an area that is by definition isolated and separated from the social sphere, it was inevitable for me to focus on a matter that arises from a personal interest and which has diverse social dimensions. Thus, I have decided to handle the issue in question with an academic approach. Consequently, this project reflects both my academic and non-academic interests, and I consider my research as an attempt to step into applied studies.

The Middle East as region presents itself both as an area of cultural diversity and an area undergoing complicated changes. In this project, I have directly focused two groups from the region: the immigrant communities from Iran and Iraq. In the first stage of my field research, I interviewed young Iranian migrants who came to Turkey for various reasons and ways and are professional musicians. Despite the rich musical culture and institutionalized musical education in Iran, a large number of professional musicians intent to migrate to a third country through Turkey in order to build their musical carriers. This is due to a lack of a lively musical market, in terms of live musical performance venues for popular music, such as bars and clubs in their homeland. I still believe that these musicians from Iran could provide fertile and sufficient material for a comprehensive study. But during my initial surveys on the literature, I have found there is a lack of comprehensive sociological studies about the migrants from Iran; on the other hand there were extensive studies about the migrant groups from Iraq; thus, I have steered the direction of this study towards the migrants from Iraq. My studies on the literature had directed me to Didem Daniş, the foremost name on sociology of Iraqi migration to Turkey. I immediately contacted

her, and luckily, she accepted a position in my committee. Her studies on the Iraqi migrant communities in Turkey not only provided me with an overall perception about the Iraqi migration to Turkey, but also her emphasis on the importance of the networks in migration processes gave me a key point for my field research.

At the initial period, my idea was to cover all migrant groups from Iraq as far as possible, ignoring diverse ethnic identities and legal statuses. But these two parameters alter the daily life in Turkey completely differently for each group, therefore so does the use of music. Considering this significant diversity, I have focused on the Christian community among them. Christians, mostly Chaldean, from Iraq do not only constitute a unique group as a religious minority both in Iraq and Turkey, but they are also a group of transit migrants who are not able to or willing to reside in Turkey. Instead, they intend to go a third country as soon as possible. So, choosing my focus group I also found the core of my study: transit migration.

When I started to deal with transit migration, I realized that there are almost no resources in ethnomusicology literature on the area of transit migration. Because these groups generally do not stay in a transit region long enough to create new or hybrid musical products, forms or genres, which migration studies in ethnomusicology is highly interested in, they have remained one of the unexamined subjects in the field. The focus on transit migration constitutes an important aspect of this study and makes a contribution to a very limited literature. In addition to the fact that transit communities can only provide a limited amount of data, the insufficiency of the literature has made it more difficult to study the subject. These difficulties have shaped my perspective and directed me to tackle the difference between settled and temporary migrant communities. This difference requires one to discuss the applicability of the theoretical tools that ethnomusicology has used in recent literature while examining settled migrant communities in relation to transit migrant communities. In order to focus on these differences, I take the given literature on the relationship of music and migration as the material of my discussion in the relevant chapters.

In comparison with other transit migrant communities in Istanbul, especially the ones from Africa, the Chaldean community from Iraq uses music in a completely different manner, and their musical practices are mostly invisible to those outside the community. During my field research, there were very few professional musicians in

the community in Istanbul; their musical practices were not visible even from a closer look. Toynbee and Dueck (2011), in the introductory chapter the book they edited, *Migrating Music*, stated:

Of course, not all migrants are musicians, let alone professionals who sell recordings and concert tickets. Even fewer are successful enough to make living primarily through such activities. Accordingly, we are concerned with amateurs as well as experts, and listeners as well as performers. (p. 1)

I do not claim that Chaldeans use their music in a similar manner to the community Ruth Finnegan had focused on<sup>1</sup>, but music is no doubt everywhere, and it is intrinsic to our personal and communal activities more than we may be aware. In this context, the role of music in the daily life of the Chaldean migrants, like most communities, is more complicated than simply being an expression of the affects of their surroundings. As I discuss in Chapter III, church music operates as a reminder that the members are still together and safe, and, as discussed in Chapter IV and V, the music young members listen to and sing as a way to express the flexibility of their self-identification.

At first glance, comparing settled and transit migrant communities through music reveals the different roles music plays in migration. Migration, as an experience, can broaden the scope of cultural innovation through the production of new musical forms. But this is mostly seen in the second or third generation of migrants (Baily and Collyer, 2006, p. 174). In contrast, new migrants, or migrants who recently started their transit in our case, usually tend to re-create and repeat the old forms of music. Adelaide Reyes (1999), in her book on the musical practices of Vietnamese refugees in both camps and in California, explains how the Vietnamese in California do not create new songs but perform the old ones in new musical styles. According to her, it is because that they need to keep their memory alive (p. 143). Ethnomusicologist John Baily (2006), in his article on the music of Muslim Khalifa community in Britain, emphasizes the lack of new compositions in destination land as well. He states that Khalifa community performs the old musical material, mostly

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<sup>1</sup> The study of Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music Making in an English Town* (2007), focuses on the surprisingly rich musical production produced mostly through local choirs in a small town, Milton Keynes.

the standard repertoire of well-known Bollywood film songs in new performance styles (p. 264).

In their introductory article in the “Music and Migration” issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Baily and Michael Collyer (2006) state that, the new musical creativeness of the migrant communities is also a means of articulation of identity, especially to the host society (p. 174). In this respect, these musical productions can address a wider community than the migrant community itself (p. 175). In our case, as a religious minority and a transit community, Chaldean-Iraqi migrants in Istanbul do not seek for more visibility in Istanbul but they prefer to use music in an inward-orientated manner. Thus, their musical production and the motivation behind it are quite different from that of permanent migrant communities.

It is likely that because of my music performance background and formation of my ideas in musicology, I believe that musical structures, and thus a technical analysis on music, can provide a deep understanding on a culture itself. However, in this project, while dealing with the issues such as representation, preservation, incorporation, et cetera, I do not prefer to examine the music in a technical manner. Similarly, I do not emphasize examining the “traditional” or “authentic” music of the Chaldean community. Rather, asking these basic questions, “How does a transit migrant community use music in coping with their situation in ‘limbo’?” and “how do their musical practices differ from that of the any permanent migratory experience?” my interest is directly on the use of music in the process of this very special type of migration. By making a comparison between the effects of transit migration and some of the other types of migrations on musical practices, in a broad sense, my study can be considered as an attempt to understand transit migration, Chaldean-Iraqi migrants in Istanbul in this case, through music.

## **1.2 Methodology: Field Research**

Ethnography is one of the main methodological tools, not only for ethnomusicology, but for the migration studies as well. Because of its complicated features, migration as an experience requires a deeper understanding than survey techniques alone can provide. Thus, current migration studies the use of qualitative studies, such as ethnographic methods, oral histories, biographies, the examination of sample cases, et cetera (Kümbetoğlu, 2012, p. 59).

My field research was mostly conducted with the Chaldean-Iraqi community in Istanbul from September 2011 to September 2014. The young members of the community were my main focus group. Considering age and gender as the basic axis, even if limitedly, I have tried to deal with the participation in the musical practices of the older generations as well. My field research in Istanbul has also covered many formal and informal interviews with the members of the Chaldean-Turkish community<sup>2</sup>, other Iraqi communities in Istanbul, and officials of some migrant organizations such as Caritas<sup>3</sup> and ASAM.

The research also had a six-month phase, carried out in the US. While I was a visiting scholar at the Ethnomusicology Doctoral Program of City University of New York, I attended related courses of significant ethnomusicologist Jane Sugarman and Stephen Blum on music and diaspora and the Middle Eastern music. As one of the great contribution of this period to my study I should note the valuable advise of Professor Sugarman to me on insisting on studying transit migration as an unnoticed area in ethnomusicology.

This six-month period of my field research consists of the interviews with Chaldean families from Iraq who recently immigrated to Houston, Texas through Turkey. I have also interviewed second-generation Chaldean migrants who live in New York, US and Toronto, Canada. Adding to that, a number of Muslim Arab-Iraqi friends who live in New York helped me to understand the characteristics of both societies.

With the suggestion of one of the leading Iraqi ethnomusicologists, Scheherazade Qassim Hassan, I attended the Arab Music Study Group Meeting of the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM) in March 2013 in order to present a paper on the religious music practices of my focus community. During this visit to Lebanon, by means of a Chaldean PhD student in ethnomusicology, Noelle Zarifeh, I was able to witness a very special religious ceremony for the Easter week in a Chaldean Church in Baabda, Lebanon.

When I started to conduct my field research, the first address I reached out was the office of the spiritual leader of Chaldean community in Turkey and vicar of

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<sup>2</sup> The Chaldean community that live in Turkey as Turkish citizens.

<sup>3</sup> Catholic confederation of “relief, development and social service organizations”, giving education on English language helps the refugees especially in their preparation process going to third country.

patriarch, Father François Yakan. Through him, I was fortunate enough to find an opportunity to attend the church services as an observer. After connecting with the keyboard player, Milad, at the end of a Sunday service in September 2011 and asking him my questions about the choir, I was able to meet the choir members personally. At this point, my connection to father Yakan helped me to be accepted in the rehearsals as a researcher. In time, I established personal relationships with some of the choir members, who became my crucial links to the community.

As sociologist Belkıs Kümbetoğlu (2012) notes, among the difficulties of a researcher's life, her interest can make no sense for the migrant (p. 77) and this can create obstacles in making observations. Additionally, the daily or ceremonial music practices in the migrant community are often not considered to be "music", for the term has a strong professional connotation in their mind. For these reasons, they can find an ethnomusicologist's attempt to observe their musical practices both superfluous and undue. Fortunately, my attendance to choir's rehearsals as a participant-observer, a violinist, has helped me to resolve most of the problems and risks mentioned above. In this context, the shift in my position from an observer to participant-observer, which has occurred through music, has become a significant milestone for my acceptance by the community. Through my participation as a performer in the church choir, I was soon invited to the weekly gatherings of young Chaldean immigrants and some of the special events of the community. On the other hand, in the US stage of my field research, I did not present myself as an active musician, but instead as a researcher in ethnomusicology. Moreover being a member of a Muslim community who studies Christian music, I was not only an outsider but also likely to be seen as a suspicious person in some of my interviewer's eye.

Participation in the field as a performer can conjure up the concept of "bi-musicality," which was introduced by Mantle Hood (1960). The concept emphasizes the necessity of learning and performing of the musical tradition by the outsider researcher as a second musical tradition in addition to her own tradition. In fact, because of the lack of qualified instructors in Istanbul on Chaldean church music, I did not have the opportunity to learn the musical tradition. Moreover, according to Hood and John Blacking, for ethnomusicologists, learning to perform the music of the community is a tool to understand the musical structures technically (Baily, 2008, pp. 118-121). Since my focus is not to learn Chaldean music, but understand the



musical practices in a migratory process, my attempt cannot be seen as directly related to bi-musicality. Rather my participation as a musician can be seen as an external interference. As Michelle Kisliuk (1997), in her chapter in *Shadow in the Field*, a significant work on the fieldwork in ethnomusicology, states that, “[T]he deeper our commitment in the field, the more our life stories intersects with our ‘subject’s’ until Self-Other boundaries are blurred. [...] When we begin to participate in music and dance our very being merges with the ‘field’ through our bodies and voices, and another Self-Other boundary is dissolved” (p. 23). The characteristics and effects of this interference and the transformation of my position to the “subject” of the study are examined in Chapter II.

Since I was a participant in the process of field, the research did not continue with formal interviews but rather through friendly conversations. Establishing personal relationships with the community members has made me become aware of the characteristics of transit migration. Even if the members of Chaldean-Iraqi community have a legal status according to United Nations’ decisions, they face a noteworthy ambiguity about their present and future conditions. This situation draws a portrait about transit migration that is crucially different from the usual experiences of migrations that we are familiar with. In the permanent types of migration, the migrant has two checkpoints: the homeland and the destination. These correspond to a perception of past and present respectively. But in the phenomenon of transit migration, the migrant has at least three checkpoints, and at the temporary transit locations between the homeland and the destination, migrants perceive a genuine temporary experience. In the “limbo” of the transit location, the migrant carries the burden of uncertainty derived from being “unsettled.” This ambiguity created, by “migration without settlement,” opens a ground for perceiving future as a total uncertainty. This uncertainty has complex effects on the migrant. On one hand, it does not give a sense of belonging and brings countless difficulties in terms of legal status and maintenance of the daily life. But on the other, it provides a room for a hope about the inexperienced future, which still holds promise for the transit migrant. And this hope comes together with a purposed ignorance about their current reality. This unsubstantiated mood is different from the mood of the settled migrant for the settled migrant’s hopes and fears are much more concrete and grounded in reality.

The burden of uncertainty occurs in various segments of transit migrants' life. The knowledge about their situation of unsettledness keeps them away from establishing more intense relationships with the local residents of the city. As an important example, in my case most of them are reluctant to learn Turkish for they do not see it necessary. The vulnerability of their legal status makes it impossible for the community members to obtain a work permit, which usually forces them to work in low-paid temporary jobs. If they do obtain a work permit, it is likely that will lose it. This vulnerability leads their status to the brink of illegality, and causes their image as migrants to swing between victimization and criminalization.

Despite this air of irregularity covering their life and despite these burdens, migrants as actors develop strategies to survive in foreign regions; and music is one of these strategies. Using this as a starting point, understanding the use of music in coping with their situation of limbo is the backbone of my study. My research questions have been formed as "How does a transit migrant community use music in coping with their situation in 'limbo'?" and "how do their musical practices differ from that of the any permanent migratory experience?"

Since the Chaldean community from Iraq is not the only transit one in Istanbul, I have contacted another transit community, people from African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Congo, et cetera to gain a comparative understanding about transit migration in Turkey. As the migrants from African countries do not share the same privileges that the United Nations grants Chaldeans, a greater proportion of their migration turns to illegal migration (Brewer and Yükseler, 2011). Under these conditions, their migration experience is often irregular. Because of these conditions, they do not migrate as groups or families, but rather prefer to migrate as individuals. So that, even though they eventually create an African community in Istanbul in a broader sense, the general features of the community are totally different than the Chaldean one. As a result, so are their musical practices. Identifying this diversity is very important for my study because it shows that we cannot equate the musical productivity of any transit migrant community with that of the Chaldeans. Thus, my findings and statements on the musical productions of the community are not necessarily applicable to other transit communities.

In addition to ethnographic methods, I have used secondary sources, such as the numerical data, musical recordings et cetera. I have also conducted e-fieldwork<sup>4</sup> to provide data both on the listening habits of the Chaldean-Iraqi youth in Istanbul and on circulation of music in transnational Chaldean networks. Besides following the social media accounts (such as Facebook pages) of the young members in Istanbul, I have made a comprehensive research on the music listening and sharing (such as portals) and cultural exchange facilities in general (discussion and chat pages) among the Chaldean diaspora around the world. Additionally, I have conducted numerous interviews with the members of this diaspora including my former informants from Istanbul who migrated to the third countries during my field study.

While conducting the field research, my aim was not to collect songs to analyze in terms of the scales, rhythmic patterns, et cetera. However, my study ended up as a collection of almost fifty religious hymns. This happened for a few reasons. First, recording music was a part a way for me to learn the hymns that I was to play at the services. Secondly, recording the services and rehearsals was a natural means of my attempt to understand the way the community uses music. So I did not to prefer create “idealized atmospheres” for recordings, hence the sound qualities of the recordings are not stable; they all are collected in natural setting, which includes services or rehearsals. Hoping that these recordings will provide data for further studies, I have added the sound recordings of some collected hymns to the DVD. In addition, basic and mostly “idealized” transcriptions of thirty melodies can be found in appendix as well. Because of the difficulty of writing Arabic and Chaldean languages with Western musical notion, as both are written with the right to left-Arabic alphabet,<sup>5</sup> it was impossible to add the lyrics to the transcriptions; instead I add some pages from the handwritten notebooks of the community members as examples of how they learn and preserve the hymns.

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<sup>4</sup> For a detailed definition of the concept “e-fieldwork” and a discussion about its uses in ethnomusicology see: Wood (2008, pp. 170-187).

<sup>5</sup> In order to over come this difficulty in some cases I write some of the Arabic or Chaldean words with Latin alphabet -with the numbers for extra letters- as the community members and people from the region often do.

### 1.3 Self Reflexivity

In recent decades, there has been a definitive change in the nature of the fieldwork in ethnomusicology; indeed this change is not unique to our field (Cooley, 1997, pp. 3, 14). It has been a shift in ethnographic methods from the ethnography of modern area that emphasis classification, description and interpretation of the musical structures of “others” in contrast to those of the Western world and “toward attempts to understand music as culture necessitates new fieldwork theories, methodologies, and epistemologies” (p. 11). In this “new” approach, the process of transmitting the field “experience” also gains a reflexive character.<sup>6</sup>

Although the term reflexivity in social sciences has various meanings, in ethnographic studies it refers to the researchers’ self-awareness on her existence in the field. Derived from critical literary studies, reflexivity as a perception tries to analyze the objectivity claims of positivist methodology by taking the researchers’ subjectivity on the examination as a factor that influences the results of the study. In my study, I used the technique of being a participant-observer, and this requires a reflexive perception. During the study, I have tested the effects of my attendance in the field on my results, and therefore I have analyzed my position as a subject of inquiry in some parts of my dissertation (see Chapter III).

Lastly, during my field research, language was the largest barrier between the community and me. Though I have started to learn Arabic, I am still not able to have long conversations in the language. Nevertheless, I should note that, even showing a most basic effort to use their native language has had a significant positive effect in the field. Additionally, I was very lucky to have Turkish speaking three sisters, Flona, Farah, and Manuela<sup>7</sup>, among my informants. As we became friends, they helped overcome any kind of translation problems during the fieldwork stage. Aside from that, English was a commonly understood language between some of my informants.

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<sup>6</sup> For a rich discussion on the issue see Jeff Todd Titon’s (1997) chapter “Knowing Fieldwork” in *Shadow in the Fields*.

<sup>7</sup> In order to protect the anonymity of my informants I use pseudo names in the study.

#### **1.4 Significance of Studying Transit Migration in Ethnomusicology**

Timothy Rice (2010), in his article *Disciplining Ethnomusicology: A Call for a New Approach*, published in the Call and Response section of the journal *Ethnomusicology*, criticized the tendency in ethnomusicology to accept the paradigms that other disciplines in social sciences offer instead of developing its own theoretical framework. Although Rice put his criticism on the concept of identity, I believe that this critical point of view might also be applicable to the studies on migration in ethnomusicology. In this respect, in this study my aim is to address this theoretical question directly in the context of transit migration by focusing on its specific nature.

Although human mobility is not unique to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, folklore and musical folklore have tended to study the effect of mass migration movements after the World War II on community, region, nation, and ethnicity. Consequently, because of both the increase in human mobilities and of its visibility via the communication opportunities of a globalized world, migration has become one of the main interests of ethnomusicology since the 1970s (Bohlman, 2011, pp. 155-156). Besides that, by the effect of the paradigm shift in ethnomusicology and the effects of postmodern tendencies (Barz and Cooley, 1997, p. 11) migration in the post-colonial world has become one of the new study areas in the discipline.

As might be expected, the interest of ethnomusicologists mainly lies mainly in the musical production of settled migrant communities in various countries, usually the musical products of second and third generation migrants. Since these migrant communities, which are constantly in contact due to the growing effect of globalization, are generally spread out over many regions and countries, the literature on music and migration has appealed to a theoretical framework of diaspora studies and transnationalism.

During the expansion of social science literature, temporary migration, namely transit migration, became one of the focus points in various fields of social science. But ethnomusicology has hardly paid attention to this kind of migratory processes, and transit migration has remained an unexplored area in the discipline.

The term “transit migration” is used to define the phenomenon where “migrants come to a country of destination with the intention of going and staying in another

country” (İçduygu, 2005, p. 1). Without ignoring the examples of circular labor migration and transit migration that occurs by the “free-will” of the migrant, transit migration, in most cases, can be seen as the result of a necessity to emigrate from the country of origin.

In the situation that emigrating from a country is necessary because of the war or ongoing violence, among many possible reasons, the migrant needs to enter a second country immediately. This is usually to a neighbor country, whether it is legally or illegally, in order to apply to international organizations for help or to plan the future steps of her migration. Since these kinds of situations constitute the vast majority in the cases of transit migration, it is not surprising that the term “transit migration” or “migration in transit” is often used in conjunction with the terms “exile,” “displacement,” “refugee,” “asylum seeker,” “eforced migration”, “irregular migration” or “illegal migration”.

Transit migration transcends the dichotomy that dominates the theoretical framework of migration studies between the country of origin and the destination point, as seen in migration theory based on pull-push factors. Instead, transit migration adds a third component: the transit phase/land. The best word to describe the essence of this transit phase, as the core of this type of migration, can be “uncertainty,” both in an economic and psychological sense.

The uncertainty felt today discourages migrants from creating permanent relationships with and developing expectations from the circumstances that surround her. Rather, the expectations and hopes are postponed to the future<sup>8</sup>. In other words, the feeling of being “unsettled” restricts the social and cultural relationships that can form with the local culture. Hence, the cultural production in this specific phase of migration has shown relatively limited interaction with the climate of the local culture. In this sense, the theoretical framework for migration in the ethnomusicology literature, which deals with settled communities, hardly provides any insight.

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<sup>8</sup> Considering the extensive human mobility of today, one can assume that the concepts of settled and migrant are become questionable, but in this case the knowledge of being unsettled provides a consciousness of the migrant’s own temporary situation.

But since it will be mentioned in the following chapters, this “local culture” can not be seen as a united entity, but rather a fragmented whole and migrants develop separate relationships with each unit. In this point, it is important to note that, Istanbul is a cosmopolitan city and the neighborhoods in which the Chaldean migrants live host multiple other ethnic groups, such as Kurds, Romans, Armenians, Syriacs, among others. Even though I mention these relations in Chapter IV, appear to be quite limited.

Unlike the musical products of transit communities, those of settled migrant communities bear the traces of the interactions between the migrant and host cultures. This can create a newly visible hybrid form of music. In this context, studying the change or re-shaping process of musical genres or styles that migrant communities had brought with them, and the “mimetic” reproduction of the given forms in the destination point, constitute the main tendencies of the field. On the other hand, transit communities, because they tend to not stay in the transit region long enough to create new or hybrid musical products that migration studies in ethnomusicology can study had remained at the margins of the field.

Taking into the consideration that the attention of migration literature in ethnomusicology excludes the transit communities, my interest has been directed to the literature on exile and displacement. However, before stating some special publications on transit migration and music, a few special journal issues and book compilations on music and migration in general are worth mentioning.

One of the earlier attempts in ethnomusicological literature that focused on migration was the special issue of *World of Music* in 1990, which has a particular emphasis on the term “exile” (Reyes). This issue was a starting point for a few articles, but did not cover any study on transit migration. After that, until the 2000s, the interest in migration was further explored via individual articles and book chapters. In 2003 a book compilation, *Musical Migrations: Transnationalism and Cultural Hybridity in latin/o America* (Aparicio and Jáques) was published. Thomas Turino’s book, *Identity and the Arts in Diaspora Communities* built upon this work by shedding light on a wider artistic area. In 2006, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (Bailey and Collyer) published a specific issue (vol. 32, No.2). In 2007, Tina Ramnarine edited the book *Musical Performance in the Diaspora*, and the following year, the journal *Ethnomusicology Forum* published an issue with her introduction.

The year 2010 was very prolific for migration studies in music. The special “Music and Migration” issue of *Migrações*, Journal of the Portuguese Immigration Observatory, covered thirty articles, and a book compilation was published in the same year. *Music and Displacement*, which mainly focuses on the displacement after World War II in Europe (Scheding and Levi 2010), was also among the fruits of the increasing interest in migration. In 2011, another book compilation and a special issue of *Migrating Music* were published. It is a compilation that covers a set of papers presented in a symposium titled “Migrating Music,” which was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London in 2009 (Toynbee and Dueck 2011). *Music and Arts in Action* published a special issue “Music and Migration”, which mostly handles the transnational aspect of migration.

Within these special compilations on migration and music, the articles and chapters, which tackle transit migration, are very limited. On the other hand, many of them, such as the chapter of Philip V. Bohlman in *Music and Displacement*, “‘Das Lied ist aus’: The final resting Place along Music’s Endless Journey,” which focuses on composed and performed music in the concentration camps erected by the Nazis, centers on the personal experiences of individual musicians, but not on the musical practices of the communities (Beckerman 2010, Bohlman 2010 etc.). Thus, these studies can be seen as a continuation of the *Exilforschung* (exile studies) of the post-war period in Europe (Scheding 2010: 123-126).

In the limited literature on music and migration, the book of Adelaide Reyes (1999) *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free*, which focuses on the musical practices of Vietnamese refugees in refuge camps, is a noteworthy contribution to the literature on transit migration and refugee studies. Similarly, Tania Kaiser’s 2006 article on the music and dance practices of Sudanese refugees deals with the music in refugee camps in which people temporarily stay. Besides that, Carolyn Landau’s 2011 chapter in *Music And Displacement* on the music consumption of an individual and the relation of this consumption with the multiple features of his identity, or identity formation. During three phases of the migratory journey of her protagonist, Mohamed, Landau’s work contributes to the small literature on transit migration in the ethnomusicology discipline.

Despite the specific and limited literature on transit migration, musical relationships among transnational migrant or diaspora networks have a greater presence in the



ethnomusicology literature. In this respect, two specific writings of Dan Lundberg, “Trans-local Communities: Music as an identity Marker in the Assyrian Diaspora” (2009) and “Assyria- a Land in Cyberspace” (2003), on the musical creation of the Assyrian diaspora are directly related to my issue. Even though Lundberg’s study is on the Assyrian community in Sweden and instead of the Chaldean community, due to the common history and roots of these two groups, these articles provide a rich understanding on the diaspora networks of the two communities.

In migration and music studies, the strongest theoretical discussions mostly involve the concept diaspora and transnationalism. In this respect, it is necessary to state some critical points on the both concepts and briefly discuss their usefulness regarding the transit community that is focused on.

The communities that spread out to more than one geographical region are called diaspora communities. For diaspora communities, the interrelation with the homeland constitutes one of the major interests.<sup>9</sup>

Another characteristic feature of diaspora communities is their insistence on returning to the homeland. Actually, it is obvious that the level of desire to return to the homeland is not the same for each community or for each generation. Indeed, for some diaspora communities, such as Romani community, there is no “home” to go back to. Similarly, Dan Lundberg assumes a virtual “homeland,” which is created through the Internet for the Assyrian diaspora (2003). Furthermore, as Bailey and Collyer (2010) remind us, even it was possible to go back to home, it would not be the same “home” they are referring to anymore (pp. 170-171).

Above all, the discussion on the cultural behavior of diaspora communities assumes two main tendencies. One is accentuating the identity and the second negotiating with the other in interactions. While the former emphasizes the nostalgia, the collective memory, and protection of the culture, the latter asserts the change and an exchange in which “new musical repertoires and practices emerge, yielding processes of hybridization” (Bohman).

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<sup>9</sup> At this point, it can be useful to remember that immigrant and diaspora communities are contrasted according to the sites with which they are connected; while immigrant communities refer to connection between two specific places, the homeland and the host society, and diaspora communities are characterized by multiple connections with various sites (Turino, 2004, p. 6).

In regards to these basic features of diaspora communities, it can be questioned whether the Chaldean migrant community in Istanbul can be considered to be a diaspora community or not. As I point out in following chapters, even though the Chaldean migrant community in Istanbul can be seen as a part of a wide Chaldean diaspora around the world, the members of the community do not put an emphasis on the hope or desire to return to their country. In addition, as a transit community, it is deprived of the opportunities to behave like a diaspora community. For instance, another characteristic of a classical diaspora community is to be inclined to be aware and active on the social and political issues in the host country and the homeland. This can be found in some Chaldean-Iraqi communities in Europe. The attempts to procure acceptance of the Assyrian-Chaldean genocide in the Parliament of Sweden and the call for voting in the elections in the homeland are among examples I have witnessed in a church in Houston, US. However, because of some practical reasons and the ambiguity of their legal status, the migrants in Istanbul are essentially not capable of doing that.

Lastly, as mentioned above, transit communities often stay for a short period in the transit country; thus, they do not live in the host country for sufficient generations to create new cultural forms and fusions. Furthermore, being a transit community brings limitations to the possible cultural relationships and bonds formed with the host culture. This makes the creation of hybrid forms of music almost impossible. However, this does not mean that transit communities are static communities, closed to cultural interrelations and change. I put forward in the following chapters that the change occurs in two ways: firstly, in a continuum with the globalization process of the community that has started much earlier, while the group was in the homeland. Secondly, it can be seen as the result of practical necessity in the process of maintaining cultural practices.

Hence, in this study, the concept diaspora is considered in the manner that anthropologist Martin Hovanessian emphasizes, “Diasporas primarily born of the loss of a national territory create a sense of identity in their exile situation, a national imagination that supports the maintenance of solidarity in dispersion” (cited by Dufoix, 2011, p. 29).

As mentioned above, one of the major criticisms to the efficiency of the concept diaspora is its overemphasis of the relations with the homeland. In this respect,

transnationalism can be thought as a term that opens room for multiple horizontal relationships among the migrant societies. Transnationalism was one of the tools to explain the circulation of capital around the world in the new economic climate that arose in the 1960s and 70s. Beyond economy, the term had been used to signal the ideas, people, and political institutions that crossed national boundaries in several disciplines, emphasizing the diminished significance of national borders in our globalized world. Adhering to a belief in the usefulness of the concept, in this study I deal with the transnational migrant networks in terms of the creation of a common musical universe among the Chaldean communities in various geographical regions.

“[T]he systematic interconnection of formerly remote parts of the world is clearly a precondition for many musical migrations. And it is capitalism and its precursor, mercantilism, that have been major engines in creating these networks, and in encouraging the circulation of European musical genres and instruments within them” (Toynbee and Dueck, 2012, pp. 3-4). In this respect, the political economy behind those relations, in the neo-liberal phase, constitutes one of the recent interests in migration studies. This interest is largely a critical view, and it can be seen in ethnomusicological literature on migration as well.

But in transit migration, economic activity is likely to be temporarily interrupted. In the case of the musical practices of Chaldean migrants in Istanbul, this disruption can clearly be seen. There is a developed Chaldean music market both in the homeland and in third countries, which includes musicians who perform live music and make recordings, record labels, studios, and listeners who consume these products regularly. But in Istanbul, several intrinsic features of transit migration become prominent, such as temporality, uncertainty, not just in the economical sense, but emotionally and physically as well, and the smallness of the community. Because of these factors, it is almost impossible to develop a market for music. In addition to the lack of professional musicianship during the course of my field research, I have only encountered one situation in which migrants make their livelihood through music. The consumption of the music has become possible through mostly free facilities via the Internet, producing little or no profit.<sup>10</sup> In other words, bearing in mind that even the use of those facilities refers to that kind of relations, the transit community in

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<sup>10</sup> On the other hand these new medias create their own market relations.

Istanbul is relatively far away from market relationships, and, in this context, they seems invisible.

## **1.5 Organization of Chapters**

In following chapters, I give general information on the community, the church music and the musical practices of young members, respectively. In all of the chapters, the distinct effects of transit migration constitute the core theme.

The second chapter gives general information on the background and status of the community to provide a general context for the following chapters. It is also the chapter in which transit migration is examined. Reviewing the basic characteristics of the community in terms of identity/self-representation, religiosity, kinship, and gender relations in this chapter, I state the determining role of these contexts and the networks created on these bases that highly affects migrants' lives in Istanbul.

The third chapter focuses on church music at the Chaldean migrant church in Istanbul both in terms of its actors/performers and in terms of their musical products. While the relationships formed by music within the church choir, and the interaction between the choir and the rest of the community are among my main interests, dealing with the church music, also exemplifies the recent hymn repertoire of the community. But there is a clear emphasis on the configuration and reconfiguration of the religious repertoire in the given conditions and the use or interpretation of church music in this specific phase of their migration. In this respect, I do not aim to open a discussion on the continuity or the change of the repertoire, but I focus on its situation today. In this chapter I also deal with the role of music in creating relationships among the Chaldean-Iraqi and the Chaldean-Turkish communities in Istanbul.

The forth chapter is on daily listening patterns of young generation of the community. This includes their weekly gatherings, special events, such as parties and wedding celebrations, and personal music sharing on Facebook. Based on the data from the field research, understanding the reflection of their multifaceted identity by music is the focus of the chapter. This chapter mentions both the effects of musical globalism, which had started long before their arrival from Iraq and the circulation of

music among homeland, transit countries, and various destination points of the Iraqi Chaldean migrants.

The fifth chapter, in contrast to the previous chapter, focuses not on listening, mostly non-religious performance practices of the community members. Taking into consideration that war and displacement cause serious traumas in the life of migrants, in this chapter I examine the use of music as a means to reflect and overcome the effects of these traumas in personal and collective layers. The age and the gender are among the main axes that I keep in my focus in this chapter.



## **2. BACKGROUND: CHALDEANS AND THEIR MIGRATION TO TURKEY**

This chapter aims to provide background information for following chapters. In the chapter, “Chaldean community” is defined as a religious and ethnic unity within its historical background. Furthermore, in order to reach a sound understanding on the specific migratory experience of Chaldean-Iraqis in Turkey the concept transit migration is defined. Dealing with the basic characteristics of the community such as religiosity, kinship and gender it is aimed to provide a deep understanding. Lastly, various networks surrounding the Chaldeans in Istanbul and helping them to sustain their life in the city is examined.

### **2.1 The Chaldeans in Iraq**

The Chaldean community in Iraq can be examined in different contexts and connections. In this part, I deal with the Chaldeans as an ethnic group in Iraq, as a part of the Christian groups in Middle East, as a part of the Christians in Iraq, and in relation with the Syriac Communities in the Middle East and through their history.

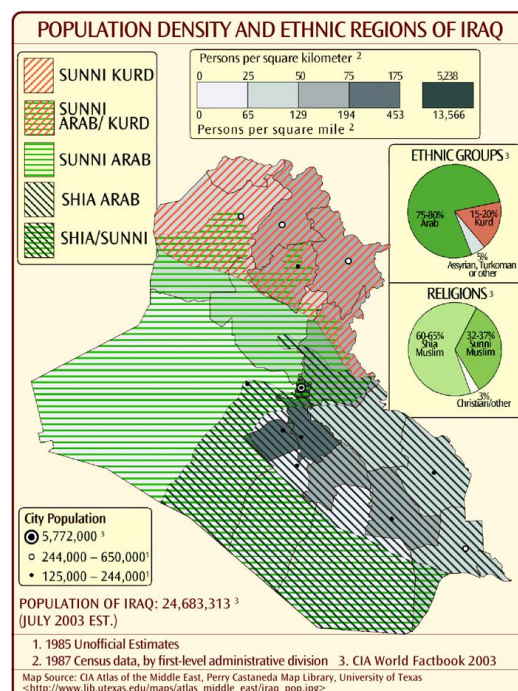
#### **2.1.1 Ethnic groups in Iraq**

“Iraq” not only refers to the modern country but also the historical region, Mesopotamia, the land between The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers (Hanish, 2008; Inati, 2003). Both as a modern country and as a historical region, Iraq has been home to many ethnic groups, religious beliefs and languages throughout history. In modern Iraq the main ethnic groups are Arab Muslims, Kurds, Turcomans (also referred to as Turkmen), Gypsies (*kawlīyya*) and African Iraqis (mainly in southern Iraq).

Total population of Iraq in 2012 was estimated at 31 million. This population was composed of 75-80% Arab, 15-20% Kurdish, and 5% other, which included Turcomans and Syriacs (also referred to as Assyrians) (Url-1).

In terms of religious beliefs, before the United States invasion in 2003, Muslims had comprised about 97% of the total population (Shia 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%) with the remaining 3-5% being Christian and others, including Yezidis and Jews.<sup>11</sup>

The Map below shows both religious and ethnic groups in Iraq before the US invasion in 2003. In the graphic on ethnic groups, the Chaldean Christians are shown in the proportion of 5% (Assyrian, Turcoman or others) and in the graphic on religious diversity they are in the division of 3% (Christian and others).



**Figure 2.1 :** Religious and ethnic groups in Iraq before the US invasion in 2003 (Url-2).

<sup>11</sup> According to Meer S. Basri (2003), after the mass exodus in 1950-51 because of the bombing attacks against Jewish targets in Bagdad, more than 10,000 Jews choose to remain Iraq but in 2003 the number was less than 100 people. (p. 147)



The Map below shows the main settlement of the Chaldean community.



**Figure 2.2 :** The main settlement of the Chaldean community in Iraq (Url-3).

The languages spoken in Iraq are Arabic (official), Kurdish (official in Kurdish regions), Turkoman (a Turkish dialect official in Kirkuk), Syriac (a modern Aramaic dialect) and Armenian. Syriac speaking people in the country constitutes 3% of the total population, 2% of them being Chaldeans, followed by Syriacs and Assyrians.

Syriac, a modern dialect of the Aramaic language, developed in Edessa (today Urfa in Turkey) in the first century CE, became the language of liturgy for Aramaic-speaking Christians. Even though Arabic language became a dominant language in the region after the conquest by Arab Muslims, the written Aramaic language lives in two main liturgical tradition today: One being Chaldean (Eastern) which is used in the Catholic Chaldean and Nestorian rites, and the other Syriac (Western) which is used in the Catholic Syriac, Jacobite and Maronite rites<sup>12</sup> (Inati, 2003, p. 140). In contrast, even though Syriac is considered as a liturgical language, its dialects have

<sup>12</sup> Political scientist Shak Hanish (2008) gives another classification: “The Western Aramaic was spoken by Jews (of Jerusalem, the Talmud, and the Targums) and the Syro-Palestinians. The Eastern Aramaic is the dialect of Chaldeans, Assyrians, Syriacs, and the Mandaeans (a small religious minority in Iraq, also called Sabians)” (p. 36).

persisted over time in the people's daily life as their mother tongue. Chaldean community of Iraq speaks Chaldean Neo-Aramic, a dialect of Syriac, and it is one of the 23 languages spoken in Iraq (Url-4).

### **2.1.2 Christians in the Middle East and Iraq**

According to sociologist and demographer Philippe Fargues (1998), the population of Christian inhabitants of the region has decreased gradually from the seventh century to the second half of the sixteenth century. The early figures from the sixteenth century show that the number of Christians was approximately 10% of the total population. He attributes this decrease to four main reasons: Conversions from Christianity to Islam by individuals or groups, massacres and exoduses with religious connotations, fusion of population through mixed marriages, and differential population growth which depended on different birth and death rates (p. 49).

On the contrary, because of the *millet* system, during the Ottoman rule, after the second half of sixteenth century, non-Muslim communities were subject to their own religious authority, and the population almost tripled in many provinces (Fargues 1998; Karpat, 1978 for the census records from the nineteenth century). After the break-up of the Ottoman Empire in the twentieth century and the formation of the modern nation states, not only did the borders drastically change, but also some of the newly independent countries did not conduct a census for decades. Today, Christians make up 5-6% of the population of the Middle East, with the largest populations being in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, and Turkey

Even though the percentage of Christian population reached its peak in many countries in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the percentage in Iraq was only around 2.2%. But contrary to the other countries this percentage has not decreased and, in fact, according to records as of the late 1990s it was 2.9% (Fargues, 1998, pp. 63-64).

According to Anthony O'Mahony (2004), a specialist on Christianity in the Middle East, there are four main Christian groups who were living in modern Iraq:

1. Catholics: Chaldeans, Syriacs (also referred as "Syrians"), Latins, Armenians and Greek Melkite Catholics.

2. Non-Arab Orthodoxs (The Church of the East, sometimes referred as “the Assyrians”): Syriac Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox and a small Coptic Community.
3. Eastern Arab Orthodox.
4. Protestants and Anglicans who accepted Christianity in the nineteenth century. (p. 435)

Among all these Christian communities, the biggest one is Chaldeans which constitutes over 70% of all the Christians in Iraq (O’Mahony, 2004, p. 435) and 2% of total population of the country, followed by the Syriacs and Assyrians (Hanish, 2008, p. 32).

This dissertation mainly focuses on the Chaldean community in Iraq, the largest group of the Syriac-speaking Christians.

### **2.1.3 Syriac communities in the Middle East**

Christianity began to spread with the churches founded by the apostles of Jesus Christ in Antioch, Damascus and Tarsus in the first century after Christ. Early Christians, in order to separate themselves from the pagan communities in Iraq, used the name “Syriac,” however this referred to a region encompassing a much wider area than modern Syria. This was the area that Christianity spread from and, in general, the term “Syriac” referred to the Syriac-speaking Christians of Mesopotamia, comprising multiple Christian traditions of Eastern Christianity which is today primarily in the Middle East and India.

After the council of Chalcedon in the 5th century The Syriac Christians were divided into two main sects: the Jacobi and Nestorian Churches. The former was founded by Yakup (James, Jacob) Baradani, and is traditionally called the Western Syriac Church. The Jacobites are also called the Orthodox Syriacs.

The latter is known as Eastern Syriac Church. The theological reason of the separation was based on a conflict about the nature of Jesus Christ. Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople between 428-31 CE, stated that Jesus Christ had two natures, one being human and the other divine; this was called the *diophysical* doctrine. After the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE, Nestorianism was condemned heresy. Nestorius was exiled first to Antioch and then to Egypt. Nestorius’s theological perspective was highly accepted in not only Mesopotamia and Chaldea but his followers also spread his theology to India and China. Among the Churches

that followed the Eastern rite in the Middle East are Assyrian Church of the East, Ancient Church of the East, and the Chaldean Catholic Church.

These two churches still exist today but in the nineteenth century a group Jacobi left Orthodox Church and joined the Catholic Church. The Jacobi Church is now known as the Ancient Syriac Church.

Among the Syriac-speaking Christians in Iraq regarding their multitude, there are respectively Chaldeans, Syriacs and Assyrians. All these people have their roots in Mesopotamia. Originally, the Assyrians were in the north, the Chaldeans in the south, the Babylonians in the middle. Throughout the centuries, regional control shifted between these groups.

#### **2.1.4 The Chaldeans**

The Chaldeans may date back to more than four thousand years ago (Hanish, 2008, p. 34). In 625 CE they gained political control of Babylon and were a dominant ruling power in Mesopotamia for a short period from 626 to 539 CE. Chaldeans adopted Christianity in the second century CE., and after the fifth century, they began to follow the teachings of Nestorius.

In the fourteenth century, some Nestorians were converted to Roman Catholicism by the Western missionaries (Inati, 2003, p. 139). In 1446, the followers of the Nestorian Church in Cyprus joined the Roman Catholic Church, and their leader was named *Bishop Timothaens of the Chaldeans* (Hanish, 2008, p. 35). In 1553, Rome extended the “Chaldean Church” to include all Assyrian and Chaldean people who converted to Catholicism (Hanish, 2008, p. 35). This is an important moment in Chaldean history because through this act, the name “Chaldeans” became to refer not only to an ethnic group, but also a specific religious identity which has become more distinguishable from other Syriac peoples.

Today the archbishop of Iraq’s Chaldeans is titled *Patriarch of Babylon over the Chaldeans*.

## **2.2 The Chaldean-Iraqis in Turkey**

The Christians are one of the most visible groups among the immigrants from Iraq, with Turkmen-Iraqis, in Istanbul. Chaldeans as the biggest group among these Christian communities, are generally transit immigrants in Turkey temporarily living in Istanbul and planning to migrate to a final destination third country, such as the US, Canada or Australia. Since this “temporary” period does not have certain limitations and transit migration is a lengthy process that can range from months to years, transit migrants are involved in processes for being incorporated into the migrant networks and take part cultural and economic life of the city by different means.

In the next section, after explaining the general characteristics of transit migration and migration from Iraq to Turkey, I focus on the Chaldean community that migrated from Iraq to Turkey. This section also covers the religious and kin-based ones that are the pre-eminent networks that the Chaldeans get contact immediately in Istanbul. Within the frame of these networks, the family as the core of the community, the transformation of gender roles through migration, and the correspondences of the Chaldean identity are also examined.

### **2.2.1 General characteristics of transit migration and Iraqi transit migration to Turkey**

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) defines the term “transit migration” as “the migration in one country with the intention of seeking the possibility there to emigrate to another country as the country of final destination” (1993: 7). Turkey, because of its geographical location, is a transit country between African, Asian, the Middle Eastern, European and the other Western countries (İçduygu and Yükseler, 2010, p. 442). Since the strictness of the migration policies of Turkey, a large number of immigrants from African and Asian countries enter the country illegally or in some cases, even if they have a visa to come to Turkey, they are unable to get a residence permit. So shortly after their arrival in Turkey, they lose the legality of their status. In such cases these immigrants have to work illegally to gain money to migrate Europe in a way be it legal or illegal. Existence of these cases

is the main reason that in migration literature, “transit migration” is generally referred to as “irregular” and “illegal”.

A part of the transit migrants in Turkey aim to apply United Nations’ refugee programs. “However, only a fraction of the 15 million refugees worldwide are assisted by UNHCR in moving to their final destination through such programs; these are of only minor relevance to transit migration” (UNCHR’s web page: 2006 (Url-5); Düvell, 2006, p. 8; and for the situation of the migrants from African countries in Turkey, Brewer and Yükseler, 2011). This means that there are a number of migrants in the country who lost their legal asylum seeker status because of the rejection. The increased migration controls on refugees and the strict board security policy of European Union results an accumulation in Turkey (Danış, 2010, p. 193). With the expiration of the visas, refusals to the residential applications et cetera, the people in this situation become illegal in time. The high numbers of illegal cases in transit migration, “cause to portray these migrants as victims as opposed to a threat” (Düvell, 2006, p. 7). On the other hand, international migrants and especially the transit or “irregular” ones, seem as infringers of the borders of the nation-state and the order to which it symbolizes. This perspective brings a securitization in the discourse and policies towards the migrants. But it is important to keep in our minds, these approaches do not offer an adequate understanding of the given situation and ignore that these migrants are indeed human agents that can develop strategies to integrate themselves into the cultural and economic life of the countries they live in, albeit unofficially.

Even though these generalizations seems applicable for almost all “transit” or irregular” migrant groups in Turkey, when we focus the Iraqi migrant communities in the country, we encounter diverse situations mostly related with various ethnic communities. The Kurdish Iraqis were the largest group of illegal immigrants who aimed to enter the Europe through Turkey both after the mass attacks to Kurds in Northern Iraq in 1988 and the First Gulf War in 1991. However, after the Ba’ath regime was toppled in 2003 and an autonomous Kurdish regime was established, many have preferred to go back to Northern Iraq. Turkmens on the other hand, sharing the same ethnic roots with the citizens of Turkish Republic, were more often able to get residence permits and did not face the same difficulties as other transit or illegal migrant groups (Danış, 2010, p. 21).

However, the legal position of Christians from Iraq is completely different. Many of the Iraqi Christians who migrated to Turkey or to the other transit countries such as Syria<sup>13</sup>, Jordan and Lebanon, have the United Nations' protection. In fact, Turkey uses the original geographical limitation of the Refugee Convention. According to the convention, refugees from non-European countries are not accepted for settlement in Turkey. But in December 2006, the "UNHCR Return Advisory and Position on International Protection Needs of Iraqis outside of Iraq" recognized the fact that there was still severe violence in central and southern Iraq. Therefore, asylum claim of Iraqis from these regions should not be rejected. Starting in December 2006 the number of Iraqi people in Turkey reached 10,000 (Danış, 2010). After the US offered refugee protection to Iraqi immigrants in 2007, Turkey has become one of the sheltering countries for the new immigrants.

Turkey is not the only choice for the Iraqi migrants for either a transit route. Considering the language difference and the cost of living, they tend to favor other Middle Eastern countries. However, many asylum-seekers believe that it is much easier to apply for refugee status and be sent to a third country by the UN while in Turkey. Thus, many people are drawn to the country with hopes of reaching their final destination sooner. (Personal interview with Emad, December 13, 2012, Houston). Indeed the rate of acceptance by the UNHCR in Turkey was almost 100% in 2007 (Danış, 2010, p. 23).

According to report for ORSAM (Danış, 2010) the Iraqi migrants who could reach Istanbul are mostly those who have a certain level of socio-economic status. In this respect, Istanbul functions as a filter to "choose economically and socially 'appropriate' people as refugees" (p. 24). In his book, *Iraqi Refugees*, Joseph Sassoon (2010) cites the study of Géraldine Chatelard based on in-depth fieldwork between 1999 and 2001 and focuses on the socio-economic aspects of the Iraqi refugees' living in Jordan. Chatelard's statements on the economic status of Iraqi migrants in Jordan remark the ties between migration and class. According to her, the lower socio-economic status Iraqis do not have the chance to emigrate from the country, and in order to migrate, they have to sell their properties and bring a large amount of money with them. Sassoon's study based on pre-2003 data and she adds

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<sup>13</sup> Because of the current situation in the country, Syria is no more considered as a transit zone.

that, after 2003, in many cases they did not have time and opportunity to sell the properties (p. 34).

Because of the migration policies of the Turkish State, there is still a large Iraqi immigrant population in Turkey with illegal status and substandard living conditions. The illegal status of these immigrants may result from either illegal border crossing or from visa expiration. The latter shows the instability of the legal status of the immigrants since the expiration of their visas may cause the status of the immigrants to change from legal to illegal.

Even though the renewed hope for their homeland has reduced the number of irregular Iraqi immigrants since 2003, when the Ba'ath regime was toppled, the number of Christian and Turkmen immigrants has actually risen. The UNHCR Return Advisory mentioned above has also enabled more asylum claims to be accepted in Turkey. It should be noted that more than the half of the asylum claimers are Christians, as it is easier for the Turkmens to acquire Turkish citizenship thereby removing the necessity for that status.

While discussing on Iraqi migration, Sassoon states that the term and concept of “exile” that refers to a person compelled to leave or remain outside her country of origin due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion (as Sassoon cites from Tabori, 2010, p. 35), can be a useful concept. It is indeed the term preferred by his Iraqi informants in Jordan (ibid p. 33).

### **2.2.2 Iraqi Christian transit migrants in Istanbul**

Until The Gulf War in 1991, there were around one million Christians in Iraq. With the toppling of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, the number rapidly decreased to 800,000.

Several factors forced Iraqi Christians to leave their homes. Most importantly, increased religious discrimination made many feel the necessity to leave. Additionally the deterioration of living standards in the country, due on the economical embargo, directed them to leave the Iraq (Danış *et al.*, 2009, p. 77). Moreover, since the American invasion, many Christians have been accused of being collaborators with the American occupation forces, making them targets of violence in Mosul and Baghdad.



As of October 2008, violence in Mosul has forced more than 12,000 Christian Iraqis to evacuate their cities and homes and left more than two-dozen dead. One-third of the families returned after a short period due to grants from the Iraqi government, however, the attack on the house of two Syrian Catholic sisters Lamia'a Sabih and Wala'a Saloha by Islamic militants on November 12, 2008 started a new flow of migration from the country. Furthermore, the Al-Qaeda led attack on a Catholic church in Baghdad on October 31, 2010, which resulted with the death of 52 people, rapidly increased the number of the Christian asylum seekers (Url-6).

In addition to that, the invasion of Islamic State (ISIS or IS) in the summer of 2014 forced the Chaldeans to emigrate from Mosul, one of the main settlements of Chaldeans in Iraq.

According to the records of the UNHCR, the number of Iraqi asylum seekers and refugees in Turkey was around 19,590 making them the largest community of asylum seekers and refugees in Turkey in August 2014.

Even though there is no credible data on the number of irregular Iraqi immigrants migrants living in Istanbul, the number is fluctuating between 1,000 and 4,000.

**Table 2.1 : UNHCR Turkey's monthly statistics as of August 2014 including both asylum seekers and refugees (Url-7).**

| UNHCR Turkey's Monthly Statistics as of August 2014*         |      |      |      |      |       |      |       |       |      |     |       |
|--|------|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|-----|-------|
| Active Caseload Breakdown by Gender and Age as of 31.08.2014 |      |      |      |      |       |      |       |       |      |     |       |
|  | 0-4  |      | 5-11 |      | 12-17 |      | 18-59 |       | 60 + |     | TOTAL |
| Country  | F    | M    | F    | M    | F     | M    | F     | M     | F    | M   |       |
| AFGHANISTAN  | 318  | 302  | 774  | 847  | 658   | 1188 | 2135  | 3418  | 75   | 108 | 9823  |
| IRAN   | 202  | 209  | 317  | 414  | 250   | 316  | 2692  | 4184  | 67   | 79  | 8730  |
| IRAQ   | 929  | 1010 | 1525 | 1685 | 1058  | 1333 | 4710  | 6585  | 382  | 373 | 19590 |
| SOMALIA  | 87   | 107  | 186  | 203  | 202   | 245  | 840   | 726   | 21   | 17  | 2634  |
| OTHERS   | 325  | 382  | 458  | 520  | 363   | 436  | 1939  | 2173  | 80   | 88  | 6764  |
| TOTAL F/M  | 1861 | 2010 | 3260 | 3669 | 2531  | 3518 | 12316 | 17086 | 625  | 665 |       |
| GRAND TOTAL  | 3871 |      | 6929 |      | 6049  |      | 29402 |       | 1290 |     | 47541 |

According to current legal arrangements of the United Nations, Iraqi asylum seekers can get refugee status upon application. While these migrants wait for transmission

to a third country, as Turkey does not grant permanent residence, they are sent to a satellite city to live. As of now, there are more than 40 of these cities.

Even though living in Turkey is not the main goal of most asylum-seekers, many come to Turkey, as the process of applying to United Nations is relatively easier in Turkey. Thus, transit migrants from Iraq tend to prefer coming to Turkey rather than other countries such as Syria and Lebanon, even though they seek to eventually join family in other countries. When refugees first arrive in Turkey, they must apply to the UN as asylum seekers and as mentioned above, when their application is accepted in about six months, police assign them to a satellite city where they will live as they wait to receive official refugee status. Afyon, Ağrı, Aksaray, Amasya, Bilecik, Burdur, Çankırı, Çorum, Eskişehir, Hakkari, Isparta, Karaman, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Kırıkkale, Kırşehir, Konya, Kütahya, Nevşehir, Niğde, Silopi, Sivas, Tokat, and Yozgat are among these satellite cities.

Since there is neither a church nor any organization to help them in those cities, the policy of resettling refugees in satellite cities given the refugees and asylum seekers another problem to cope with. To be able to have access to these supporting facilities, they invoke all legal, and in some cases illegal, opportunities to stay in Istanbul.

Kurtuluş<sup>14</sup> and Dolapdere are two of the main areas in Istanbul where the Chaldean migrants from Iraq, as well as other Iraqi and non-Iraqi immigrant communities, have settled. Since Istanbul is an expensive city, staying there brings financial difficulties in addition to the risks associated with living with an illegal status. Unfortunately, the asylum seekers and the refugees in Istanbul, as in Turkey in general, face chronic unemployment. Even if they are lucky enough to find a job, they are usually paid less than Turkish citizens. Moreover, immigrants are often forced to work illegally, making them vulnerable to abuse.

Most of the young male migrants that I interviewed work as carriers in textile firms around Osmanbey and the young women as unqualified textile workers in the small ateliers. It is important to note that jobs can be deemed as mere drudger, and all my

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<sup>14</sup> Iraqi immigrants call the area "Little Baghdad". It is worth to be examined that why this metaphor is constructed by the perception of cities but not the countries, like Baghdad or Istanbul considering Kreuzberg is called as little Istanbul.

interviewees have complaints about the long working hours, bad working conditions, low payment, and the precarious nature of these jobs. Besides that, Didem Daniş's (2007) research shows that many of the young migrant Chaldean women work as domestic workers.

Although they complain about all these difficulties, the Chaldeans do not seek ways to resolve them. This passive attitude gives clues about Chaldeans' positions as transit migrants in Istanbul, and is likely a result of it. First, even though they have a legal asylum seeker status, it is not easy for migrants to get work permits. Like migrants from other parts of the world, they are seen as cheap labor. Moreover, they do not possess the tools such as the language, contacts, or experience to face and resolve their problems. Second, it is intrinsic in their way of experiencing the transit migration to deal with these difficulties as temporary sufferings to go through until they reach their final destination.

### **2.3 Basic Characteristics of the Chaldean Community**

Multiple aspects of identity such as class, race, ethnicity, age, and gender shape people and their behavior (Pessar and Mahler, 2001, p. 6). These aspects also provide a range of options for someone to choose from and are put in action within power relations in each given situation. One can pick the relevant aspect in each case in order to obtain the greatest advantage. This statement can also be applied to the community as a whole. In this section, I aim to give some basic characteristics of the Chaldean community, which affects the formation of identity and acts in areas of transit and their final destination.

#### **2.3.1 Being "Chaldean"**

The Chaldean community interconnected community and especially in a foreign land this characteristic becomes more obvious. The concept of identity and its formation process has various traits, which reveal a necessity to handle the concept with care. Identity points out both "uniqueness" and "sameness" at once. This means that, a subject's identity works both to construct a unique self and to define the ground of relation that this unique self can associate herself within a sphere of unity. This dimension of unity generally becomes apparent when talking about an ethnic identity. Because I engage with the Chaldean community as an ethnic community,

based on the reasons stated below, I deal with the concept of “identity” through the community layer. But that does not mean this study undervalues the role of the individuals as agents who can consciously choose and emphasize the characteristics they have and form their “identity” according to their changing needs (Barth, 2001). Moreover, especially in Chapter IV and V, I uncover personal preferences that are mostly based on age and gender.

The interviews with the Chaldeans from Iraq, both in Istanbul and the US, and the research on transnational Internet blogs and forums of the Chaldean community clearly show that, being “Chaldean” is the most important element of their self-representation. Referring to both their pre-Christian roots in Mesopotamia in terms of ethnic origin and religious aspects of their culture being the first Christians, it is clearly an ethno-religious identity.

The Chaldean migrants in different phases of their migration define themselves not as “Iraqi,” but “Chaldean.” Even though they have different cultural, historical, and economic ties with the local life and people in each phase of the migration, being “Chaldean” means more or less the same to them. This has been evident whether interviewees were in their homeland, in a transit country, or at their final destination. According to all my interviews, the Chaldeans in Iraq also share the same perception (Personal interviews with Bashar<sup>15</sup>, 26 October 2012, New York; with Flona, October 2011, Istanbul). Similarly, on the website of the Michigan based Chaldean Community Foundation, it is states that “Chaldeans differ from the majority of Iraqis in three major aspects: first, they are Christian rather than Muslim; second, their ancestral language is Aramaic rather than Arabic; and third, most prefer to identify themselves as Chaldeans rather than Arabs or Iraqis.” (Url-8) Even after they accept or “gain” the citizenship of their destination country, people have used hyphenated self-identifications, such as Chaldean-American, to avoid the necessity of choosing just one identification. A short interview on web with Lawrence, a second-generation Chaldean-American living in Michigan demonstrates that identities on both sides of the hyphen are deeply accepted. Around the time of the 2012 national elections, his Facebook page clearly showed that he was a republican. His cover photo was an

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<sup>15</sup> A Chaldean young man, a second-generation migrant from Iraq, living in New York while his family and many other relatives live in Detroit.

American flag. The current status post was “This country [the US] was founded with the hard work of our ancestors” implying that he is an American. But he answered my first message by saying “Of course, I would like to help someone who research our [the Chaldean] culture” (August 2012, his personal Facebook page).

On the other hand, the Muslim Arab Iraqis in the US call themselves directly “Iraqi”, “Iraqi-American”, or “American” depending on the time they have spent in the both countries (Personal interviews with Jumanah<sup>16</sup> and Khaled<sup>17</sup>, 2012, New York). This is also connected with the citizenship policies of US, *i.e.* after the first generation, migrants can be granted citizenship by being born in the country.

Mary C. Sengstock (2005), a researcher who has numerous books on the Chaldean communities in the US, narrates the history of self-representation of the community in the US. Chaldean migration to the US had started at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century mostly due to economic reasons. Since the Census Bureau did not accept the term “Chaldean” as an ethnic category, because of its religious designations, they had to choose another category, such as Assyrian, Arab, or Iraqi to describe themselves for decades. But the reluctance of the community to accept one of these categories had caused a considerable undercount of the population until the Census Bureau recognize the term “Chaldean” as an ethnic category in the 2000s (pp. 7-8).

According to Charles Taylor (1994), a leading theorist on the areas of identity and citizenship, an identity is defined by the porter of the identity through a tension with the external whole that the subject interacts with. In other words, formation of an identity involves both internal and external actors, and the environment of the subject has strong effects on determining the main aspects of the identity. As can be understood, “identity” always operates on a basis of reciprocity with the “other”. In this sense, the individuals’ and groups’ description -and in some cases perception- about their identity is not independent of the others’ view. For the minority communities who live among the others, it can play a greater role. Besides that, individuals, as actors, bring some cultural differences to forefront in order to separate themselves from the others. As the cultural borders and structures produced by

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<sup>16</sup> A Muslim Arab-American young woman, early 20’s, a second-generation migrant from Iraq, living in New York with her family.

<sup>17</sup> A Muslim Arab young man, early 30’s, a doctoral student in New York while his family migrated to Lebanon years ago.

people are dynamic rather than static (Barth, 2001, p. 24), any change on the others' view would affect their description on themselves. In this respect, Sengstock draws the transformation of the terminology the US Chaldean community uses to identify themselves respectively as "Tekeffe" (referring to the name of their home town, Telkif), Iraqi, and even "Christian Arabs" for a short period of time, according to various parameters that affect the perception of them and the others'.

A particular case from my field research relates directly to the other's perception. In a theater play produced by young migrants performing in Oratorio<sup>18</sup>, there is a section about the short stories of migrants in the interviews with the UN officers in charge of evaluating their applications. One of these sections narrates a conversation between an officer and a young Chaldean man. The officer says that if the young man steps over the flag of Iraq the officer throws on the ground, he can get acceptance to anywhere he wants to go. And the young Chaldean, with his anger, states that this flag deserves to be kissed but not being stepped over.

I have to admit that, this scene was surprising for me because it was the first time I had seen Chaldeans championing Iraqi identity. Soon after, in various situations I witnessed their reaction against the US invasion in Iraq. Adding to that, I realized in that sense they put the UN more or less on the same level with the US. Thus, this behavior can be seen a result both a diasporic nationalist attitude that I mentioned above and as an example of how the Chaldeans' see their identity in the mirror of the other.

An array of parameters, including the foundation of nation state, the war, the rise of Arab nationalism, et cetera, both in the homeland and the US (Sengstock, 2005, pp. 59-68) can affect the self-identification process. An earlier study based on the data gathered before 2003 notes that the Chaldeans in Istanbul find it appropriate to be called by the term "Iraqi" (Url-10). However, today, after the resolution of the

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<sup>18</sup> Don Bosco Refugee School, which is a school that "Salesians of Don Bosco" founded in Istanbul around the complex of St. Esprit Latin Church, aims to give education to young Christian Iraqis while they stay in Istanbul. The school also organizes weekly gatherings for young members on Saturday afternoons; they call both the place and the gatherings "Oratorio" (an early meaning in *It.* small chapel, than it is used for a religious musical form). For more information on Salesians of Don Bosco see Url-9.

nation-state of Iraq and the rise of sectarianism, they do not accept this identity as readily as before. Therefore, “Chaldean” is the term today they most identify with while discussing the identity issue in the community in Istanbul. A particular case on their insistence of using Chaldean language in public sphere exemplifies their emphasis on Chaldean identity. In the first meeting of the theater project I have mentioned above, they first discussed the language they will use for the production. The subject of the play would be the cases and problems the community faces with during migration. Farah and some other members insisted on using the Chaldean language, their mother tongue, to express their sincere feelings. After much discussion, however, they decided to use Arabic in order for the play to be understandable the whole community, including the ones who are not fluent on Chaldean<sup>19</sup>. But, it was clear that they all agreed with Farah’s preference. After analyzing several cases like this, I prefer to address the community with the term “Chaldean” in my project.

As I have mentioned before, “Chaldean” identity is an ethnic identity with deep religious implications for it has very strong connotations to early Christianity. Considering their position as a religious minority even in their homeland for the Chaldean-Iraqis, two points become apparent. First, it is obvious that in their case, “nationalism” does not refer to being “Iraqi” but to being “Chaldean.” Secondly, it can be assumed that lines of their self-representation are mostly drawn by the religious connotations of the term “Chaldean”.

As stated above, Chaldean community is described as a highly religious community and the community life is organized mainly around religious practices (Sengstock, 2005). Sociological studies on Chaldean migration to Turkey state that, giving them “the opportunity of having a wider social network [...] also helps them to continue their daily life in such difficult conditions in a foreign country” the religion is one of the most significant factor in the Iraqi Christian social organization in Turkey (Danış, 2010; Danış *et al.*, 2009, p. 532).

Not only for the community taken into consideration above, but also for many other migrant communities that have gone through a trauma because of war or

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<sup>19</sup> Because of the assimilation policies in Iraq the language of the education for Chaldeans is Arabic. Thus, many of the community members are not able to speak their mother tongue fluently.

displacement, the emphasis on the religiosity did not fade, but rather it increased during the migration process.

When diaspora theories are taken into consideration, diasporic nationalism, which refers to a kind of cultural essentialism among migrant communities, is not unexpected for a migrant community. The longing for the original culture and homeland may stimulate a kind of diasporic nationalism in addition a resistance to change and a form of nostalgia. Political scientist Ayhan Kaya (2004) states, “Diaspora nationalism is a reaction to alienation and structural outsiderism, and shows itself in the form of celebration of the past and authenticity.” (p. 226) According to historian and anthropologist James Clifford (1994), this kind of diasporic nationalism is usually a result of a critical approach to the nationalism of the majority (p. 307). It is obvious that, while they stay in Istanbul there is an us/others dichotomy in the community’s mind. This dichotomy, as Clifford emphasizes, is not created just in their imagination; when we consider the language barrier and the religion difference, it seems quite predictable.

### **2.3.2 The family as the core of the Chaldean community and the transformation of gender roles through migration**

Focusing on the family relations and the gender roles of the community is significant for two reasons. First, gender relations have a determining role in reaching migrant networks and the opportunities they provide (Ihlamur-Öner, 2012, p. 314). Secondly, in order to understand the kinship based networks, we need to understand the role of the family as the core of the community and the role of the extended family in constituting the social ties to ease the construction of community institutions and practices during the migration (Danış, 2007, p. 605).

The family and the traditional family relationships constitute the core of the Chaldean group solidarity (Gallagher, 1999, p. 158). This family is an extended one that includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. During the migration, this extended family also extends with prolonged “visits” of newcomer relatives. Besides, due to frequent marriages between cousins, the Chaldean community considers itself to be a single large family (Sengstock, 2005, p. 14).

In the Middle East, the family has a great effect on the social and religious identity, and it provides a life-long economic security to the members (Gallagher, 1999).



These familial social ties are hierarchical, based on age and gender. This creates privileged positions in the community. Despite the religious differences, this family structure of the Muslim societies in the Middle East, which are patrilineal and patriarchal, is more or less the same for the Chaldeans (Gallagher, 1999, p. 150). Additionally, they are both based on traditional divisions of labor between gender and age groups, and thus, traditional gender roles among the family members (Danış, 2007, p. 610; Sengstock, 2005).

The statements of Barbara George Gallagher (1999), a researcher who completed a doctoral dissertation on the gender and family relations between migrant Chaldean women in the US, are quite fundamental and applicable for the community in Istanbul: "Teens and young adults are allowed to congregate in mixed-gender peer groups; this is one of the ways of socially interacting in public without violating the cultural norm. In the mix-gender groups of Chaldeans, the males still are able to exert their power over the Chaldean females, whether they are family or friends." (p. 155)

Migration is a process, in which the definition and the perception of "home" is redefined. In this process, aspects of identity such as social class, race, age, and gender are also challenged with a range of new experiences for the individual and community. This redefinition and reconstruction of the structures can cause more egalitarian gender relations in the post migration experience. The gender roles of women and men are both exposed the challenge during the migration process (Akis, 2012, p. 392), and it can result in the balancing of the gender hierarchies at home or in the public sphere (Akis, 2012, p. 387). Among the main reasons for the transformation of the gender roles and age groups is socio-economical reasons, in which the status of male as the breadwinner is turned upside-down due to difficulties in finding employment in the transit country (Danış, 2007, p. 610).

Since there are various states of migration in terms of migration reasons, legal status et cetera, it is not possible to define a single position for a woman in the process. On one hand, there is the feminization of international migration due to the migration of domestic labor, which is a type of migration unique to women (Danış, 2007, p.

603).<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, there are other types of migration, such as the migration from African countries, which is usually illegal in nature; thus, mostly male subjects undertake the journey. Therefore, if there is a transformation in gender relations, it is would take on different forms for these different migration experiences.

Even though young men escaping the military service in Iraq migrated to Turkey before and during the 1991 Gulf War (Danış, 2007, p. 604) by the means of legal eases, the Chaldean migration is a migration in which families mobilize together and women are in the migration flow. In fact, they constitute the majority in some cases. Sengstock (2005) also says about the Chaldean migration to the US that, males were the first comers a century ago, but in recent years, women and children more likely to migrate (p. 48).<sup>21</sup>

The studies on the Chaldean migrants in the US show that Chaldean migrants not only take family as the core of their identity, but they also transform the concept of gender and family (Gallagher, 1999, p. 151). For example, the Chaldean immigrant women in Detroit challenge the gendered inequalities and contradictions within the family by negotiating through the given power structures and without challenging with the established values of the family (Gallagher, 1999, p. 152; Sengstock, 2005, p. 22). At this point, it is important to state that the norms and values of the host society are quite effective in this transformation.

When we look at the Chaldean migrant community in Istanbul, we clearly see that the temporary situation of the community creates a distinctly isolated community, with the women and the older generation being the subject of a double-isolation. This basic differentiation between the migrant community in the US and Turkey is worth keeping in mind as it points to the main distinction between temporary and settled migrant communities in general. On the other hand, the migration as an experience makes possible some subtle but critical changes due to characteristics we mentioned above. Two cases from my fieldwork exemplify this feature:

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<sup>20</sup> For a study on feminization of migration due to the transformation of regime of welfare see: Ihlamur-Öner, 2012b.

<sup>21</sup> Differently than the male migration, this characteristic of Chaldean migration can be seen as one of the reasons of the idea no-going back to Iraq again.

One of my informants, Jan Dark, a young woman in her early 20's, is one of the permanent volleyball players among the young Chaldean migrants. It is necessary to note that during these games, the teams mostly consist of male players with at most one female player on each team. It is not a written rule, but even if there are two female player of the same team who are willing to play, only one of them will be allowed to play on the court. Jan Dark not only plays in many matches, but she also performs in theater, and she is a very talented singer in the church choir. Since I met her, she has been one of the most self-confident and skillful youth members of the community. So that it was quite shocking to hear she say that she gained this self-confidence in the post-migration process in Istanbul, and it is a new and positive experience for her: "I was quite shy in Iraq and did not dare to do many of the things I do here. I came out of my shell (laughing)" (February 4, 2013). In this respect, I should add that, among the reasons she gained the self-confidence (also see Chapter III).

Another case from my fieldwork shows that how young Chaldean women desire a change in the inequality in their community and how they create a niche to articulate this desire. The theater play that young members produced consisted of sections that narrate and criticize the position of a young female in a typical Chaldean family. Even though it does not include a clear challenge to the family structure, it does present the complaints about the way the community perceives the honor of the family through the purity of women and the inequality created by that perception.

A discussion on gender roles has to go beyond the female-male dichotomy and should take into consideration LGBTI<sup>22</sup> individuals. My long-term field research with the Chaldean migrant community in Istanbul provided me an idea about the situation of LGBTIs in the community, not by their presence, but by their absence. The only case I have encountered in Istanbul was at Oratorio, where one of the Chaldean boys imitated a common stereotype of a gay male to make his friends laugh.

But a personal observation in New York shows that the LGBTI members of the community are not invisible in the US. A second generation Chaldean migrant who

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<sup>22</sup> Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex.

was born in the US, Bashar, identifies as a gay male. Even though he lives in New York, in a city where there is no Chaldean community, he is quite attached to his Chaldean identity. He has strong connections with his family and relatives in Detroit and frequently visits them. In our first interview on October 26, 2012, he did not mention his sexual identity. But later I came across a post of him on YouTube (Url-11) from 2010. In the video, which he had uploaded using his real name, he tells how he had worried about disclosing his sexual orientation to his family and his close vicinity to them and how after he had disclosed himself, the community became more open to talking about sexuality issues. It is important to note that he makes his speech completely in Arabic to address his community.

If we come to the gender relations in the Chaldean migrants' church in Istanbul, male and female members of the community do not share the same sections in the church and sit separately. As Flona has stated, it is the same in Iraq. Conversely, the congregation of the Chaldean Church I visited in 2013 in Lebanon sits together. According to Flona,

“[I]t comes from the culture. In the religion, sitting separately is a sin. Actually we do not have segregation in the religion, everybody is the one. The Salesians<sup>23</sup> shocks when they see our setting here. Because, in the religion, it does not matter if you are male or female. But as we have lived in a Muslim society, some of our customs have highly affected from theirs. But, when one migrate to the West the mentality is changing” (Personal interview, 3 November 2013, Istanbul).

Her statement is in parallel with that of Mary C. Sengstock. In her book on the daily life of the Chaldeans in Michigan, the US, she states that this separation had continued until the mid-twentieth century in the US. On the other hand, even though they live in another Muslim society, the Chaldean-Turks in Istanbul sit together in their church.

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<sup>23</sup> Is a Roman Catholic religious institute founded in the late nineteenth century by Saint John Bosco in order, through works of charity, to care for the young and poor children.

## **2.4 Social and Religious Networks in Istanbul**

### **2.4.1 Social networks**

Social networks are the networks of interpersonal relations, be they relations of kinship or relations of cooperation resulting from a shared community origin that connects newcomers with the immigrants who have already settled in the new land. These networks usually have a great influence on international migration movements because they make life much easier for the already existent community or the newcomers, as they reduce the costs and risks of both migration (Haug, 2010, p. 590) and living in a new country. In some cases, these social networks also constitute a form of social capital that facilitates the newcomers' finding jobs.

Migration networks have a great influence on not only the daily life of transit immigrants, but also on their decisions (Sassoon, 2010, p. 35). As an approach of migration theory, "network theory accepts the view of international migration as an individual or household decision process, but argues that acts of migration at one point in time systematically alter the context within which future migration decisions are made, greatly increasing the likelihood that later decision makers will choose to migrate." (Massey *et al.*, 1993, p. 449) Since the migrants follow their relatives in migration from Iraq to a third country, these networks have a strong effect on the decision process of the migrants about the transit and the final countries. In other words, these networks stimulate the "chain migration" (Ihlamur-Öner, 2012, p. 313). In addition, in the case I focus on, we can see that existence of these networks is effective on the insistence of the community members on staying in Istanbul instead of living in satellite cities.

My fieldwork both in Istanbul as the transit country and in the US as the destination point confirmed the importance of the migrant networks on the daily life of migrants. The UN and the other foundations provide some facilities, such as 3-months insurance, to the legal refugees in the destination country, however these are usually quite limited and far from fulfilling the needs of the migrants. In reality, as it is in Houston, getting a job or hiring a proper place to live is only possible through the support of former migrant relatives or acquaintances.

For instance, Adnan, a 32 years old Chaldean migrant from Iraq who went to the US through Turkey, found his first job at a Mexican restaurant in Houston through his cousin who migrated to San Diego three years ago. However, because of the lack of the migrant network, he could not find any job in Afyon, Turkey, during his stay in the satellite city for 6 months (December 17, 2012, Houston). Emad, in his 40's, similarly, could not work during the 8 months period he spent in Istanbul with his family. Because of they lived in Aksaray, which was not a preferred location for the other Chaldean-Iraqis in the Istanbul, they did not have strong relations with the Chaldean-Iraqi community in the city, thus, the family was unable to find employment (December 13, 2012, Houston).

#### **2.4.2 Religious networks**

Religious networks in the transit or destination land both represent stability and change by undertaking new functions based on the new needs of migrants. They create transnational ties and provide continuity in the community life and compensate the lack of common references of belonging (Ihlamur-Öner, 2012a, p. 319). The use of music in this extent is discussed in Chapter IV.

The stiffening of religiosity is not inevitable, but possible for newcomers because the religion operates as an indicator of identity. Chaldean newcomers, immediately after their entrance to the country, attend in religious ceremonies that provide an emotional support to deal with the difficulties of being adapted to their new life (Danış *et al.*, 2009, p. 533). But it is important to state that, attendance at these ceremonies does not only have spiritual implications. The newcomers do not have many options, and it is normal for the migrants to seek refuge in the main socialization hub. The Church's role as the main socialization ground reveals the reciprocity and intertwinement between the religious and social spheres. This has been articulated by François Yakan, who stated that the Chaldean Church in Istanbul is not only one of the main gathering places for Christian Iraqi immigrants, but also a very important mean to penetrate the Christian Iraqi network which will give migrants a variety of opportunities. These range from providing an agency to apply to UN to finding a job and accommodation during their stay in Istanbul (Personal interview, September 2011, Istanbul). This is typical of migrant religious networks (Ihlamur-Öner, 2012a, p. 321).

Taking into consideration the religious aspect of Chaldean identity and its reflections on the social relations, the religious networks, the church, and the charity organization Caritas, it is clear that religion constitutes the most significant social and economic devices in the migrants' life (Danış, 2007).

The Chaldean migrants have conducted their own Aramic (Chaldean) services in this church. Currently they use St. Esprit Catholic Cathedral<sup>24</sup> in Harbiye; François Yakan and other priests of the Church of Anatolian Chaldeans conduct the services together with the acolytes from Iraq.

Earlier, the migrant Chaldean community used the small church next to St. Antoine Church in Taksim for their weekly services. When they moved to a bigger church, St. Esprit Cathedral, they had to change the time of their Sunday service from 3.00pm to 8.30am to fit the schedule of St. Esprit Cathedral. Even though this arrangement has made little difference on the attendance to the church, the weekly services on Sunday mornings have a sufficient number of attendees with 200-300 people each week.

Since the priests are from the Anatolian Chaldean community cannot speak Arabic, the services are in Chaldean. A considerable portion of the Chaldean-Iraqis speaks and understands Chaldean, their mother tongue. But almost at each services, after the sermon in Chaldean, there is a translation to Arabic for the rest of the community who does not have sufficient understanding of Chaldean.

Despite these kinds of complications or insufficient choir performances in some services, there is a strong religious atmosphere in the church by the full involvement of the assembly in the prayers during the ceremony. Even if there is no choir to perform during the service, the community takes over the duty.

Although almost all of the Chaldean-Iraqis live in the same neighborhoods, the brief time period following the Sunday service is very important in terms of getting together and creating a community feeling (Danış, 2007, p. 606; Sengstock, 2005 for the Chaldeans in the US). After special events, such as feasts, there is a modest offering in the yard consisting of pastry, which prolongs the period of the gathering. Only rare occasions, such as wedding and engagement ceremonies or weekly

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<sup>24</sup> Also other Catholic migrant communities use the same church for their ceremonies.

gatherings at Oratorio, can provide a similar level of interaction in the community, but certainly not with the same symbolic meaning.

“Actually all Iraqi refugees are in similar situations in Turkey however; there are fewer organizations supporting Christians than others,” François Yakan says. The Christian organizations have a crucial role in the life of Iraqi Christians in Istanbul. They can help with legal assistance during application processes and other kind support, such as food allowance, medical support, et cetera from humanitarian organizations. Among these organizations, the most significant ones are: The Istanbul Interparish Migrant Program, an umbrella group, which assists migrants and asylum seekers; the Chaldean-Assyrian-Syriac Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Organization (KASDAR); Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants (ASAM); Chaldean-Assyrian Solidarity Association (KADER) and Caritas. Caritas is a Catholic confederation of "relief, development, and social service organizations", giving English language classes to help refugees in their preparation process for going to a third country. The education Caritas gives is quite important for the Chaldean-Iraqi Children who do not have any opportunity to attend to the formal education in Turkey. These very young members of the community attend the daily classes at Caritas.<sup>25</sup>

Mary C. Sengtock (2005) mentions the role of the Chaldean Church in the US as a way to teach the Chaldean language and preserve of culture, like for most of the migrant community churches (p. 34; Ihlamur-Öner, 2012a, p. 322). This basic information shows one of the main differences between the transit and settled Chaldean communities. In the transit phase of their migration, the migrants' focus is directly on their future and the ties with the tradition and customs as very much still alive. On the contrary, once they have settled in a third country, the nostalgia and preservation of the culture became significant issues.

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<sup>25</sup> During my fieldwork in Houston I have told that there was also music education in Caritas. The teacher was another Chaldean migrant and who went to the US few years ago. But unfortunately my informant did not have the contact of him.



## **2.5 The Relationship between the Chaldean Migrants and the Chaldean-Turkish Community**

According to the most recent studies, religious networks give the opportunity to incorporate the social, economical, and political life in the settled country, rather than being a barrier on the integration (Ihlamur-Öner, 2012, p. 322). As an ethno-religious community, Chaldean-Iraqi community in Istanbul creates relationships with Chaldean-Turkish community in the city through religious networks. Similarly, Didem Daniş (2007) states, “the religious identification apparently prevails over national identification during the migration process for the Iraqi Christians who have not made connections with other Iraqi groups like Kurds or Turkomans, but have been incorporated into an ethno-religious network” (p. 606).

The Chaldeans today constitute very small community in both Anatolia and Istanbul. In Istanbul, they have strong ties with the Syriac-Orthodox community with whom they share some historical and cultural aspects of their identity, however they do not share the same Christian tradition.

My first impressions of the interactions of the Chaldeans from Iraq with the ones from Turkey was based on some informal interviews with Flona, who put into words her disappointment by saying that, “They do not help us, they [are] just like the Turkish people!” (May 19, 2012, Istanbul). But further questioning the issue and the article of Didem Daniş on the role of the religious networks on entering the domestic service sector for Christian migrant women from Iraq (Daniş, 2007)<sup>26</sup> clearly shows that these communities definitely have economic relation through mediation of their shared religious identity. The Chaldean-Assyrian-Syriac Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Organization, KASDAR, who help newcomer Chaldean-Iraqis, also plays a key role in this relationship.

Beside these economic relations, Chaldean migrants have a great effect in order to enrich the religious services of the Chaldeans from Turkey. The latter has its own small church in Taksim but because of the infrequency of the congregation of the Chaldean Church during the summer, the community attends the Chaldean-Iraqi

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<sup>26</sup> In her article “A Faith that Binds: Iraqi Christian Women on the Domestic Service Ladder of Istanbul” Didem Daniş (2007) examines the niche that is developed among non-Muslim migrant and settled communities within the domestic sector in Istanbul.

church for weekly ceremonies. Thus, the church of the Chaldean migrants is the main sphere of encounter for these two communities. Moreover, the Chaldean migrant community, having a larger congregation, makes it possible to conduct the ceremonies regularly.

The lack of a choir at Anatolian Chaldean Church reveals a constant requirement for the performances the Chaldean migrant choir in the Anatolian Chaldean Church. With the “spirit” that music can create, the migrant choir brings a freshness and liveliness to the church. This refreshment that newcomers bring from the homeland is also one of the main elements that renews the commitment to the cultural identity. It also can be seen in any migrant community that the flow continues. The case of Nadia, a young second generation Chaldean woman, seems very relevant. She is a half Italian and half Chaldean woman who lives in Toronto. She had preferred to identify herself as an Italian for years. Then in a time, she re-discovered her Chaldean identity, and according to her, it is impossible to deny the effects of the people newly immigrated to Canada. As she stated, it was a very intensive moment when she spoke some Chaldean words to her grandfather, and he replied her saying “now you are a real Chaldean” (Personal interview, November 3, 2012, New Orleans).

Music is a strong means of creating a relationship between the Chaldean Turkish and Iraqi communities. The role of music in this relationship is discussed in Chapter IV.

### 3. MUSICAL PRACTICES AT THE CHALDEAN MIGRANT CHURCH IN ISTANBUL

*... song rises from the timeless instant  
between arrival and departure.*

Philip V. Bohlman<sup>27</sup>

The religious musical repertoire of the Chaldean liturgy mainly consists of hymns that are an indispensable part of the ritual. The liturgy also includes prayers, which are partly performed musically, such as the prayer sung antiphonally by the acolytes just before the Sunday service each week. In this study, I only focus on the hymns that are clearly seen as a musical product and perform by the choir.

These hymns are sung and listened to at the church services, outside of the church for special occasions, such as the specific gatherings at oratorio before the Easter holiday, and are shared on the Internet among the Chaldean networks around the world (see Chapter IV).

In this chapter, based on my ethnographic study, firstly, I tackle the religious music practices in the context of the actors of these performances. While discussing the personal agency of young migrants in religious musical practices, I deal with some questions on the role of music in the incorporation and use of religious music in maintaining culture. The narrative of, the Easter Mass and its rehearsals (see appendix A), which have been selected as a representative sample of the special religious ceremonies that I have attended and performed in while at the Chaldean migrant church in Istanbul, can help reader better understand the process of rehearsals and the services mentioned below.

Secondly, a more detailed examination the hymn repertoire in terms of the classification of the hymns and the process of re-shaping at the transit phase is the subject of the chapter.

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<sup>27</sup> From Bohlman's article on the music composed and performed at Nazi's concentration camps. "“Das Lied ist Aus” The Final Resting Place along Music's Endless Journey”.

### 3.1 The Choir

During the ordinary services and the special ceremonies, the church choir performs the hymns. If there is no choir, acolytes, sometimes with the participation of the congregation, sing the hymns at the certain points of the mass. The choir is composed of young members of the Chaldean migrant community (Figure 3.1). These members do not have any formal music education, but some of them were educated at the church in Iraq as “altar boys.” The choir consists of four to ten members. The smallness of the choir is directly related with the smallness of the community in transit through Istanbul. Both Iraq and the US have far more institutionalized religious networks and religiously trained community members, which allows for more crowded choirs to consistently perform. Because of the difficulties of being unsettled, Istanbul there is no church music education for children or young members, which prevents a permanent and a highly qualified choir from being formed.



**Figure 3.1 :** The choir at a rehearsal at the main hall of the church (August 30, 2013, taken by Evrim Hikmet Öğüt).

The choir is mainly composed of female members. Based on my observations, I can claim that while female members are more willing to perform as a part of the choir, male members prefer performing as soloists. These tendencies can be related to the

gender roles in the community that make it relatively difficult for women to sing alone in public sphere.

The instrumental accompaniment to the choir performance also depends on the options available. During my field research, I witnessed services with the accompaniment of three keyboardists, and a violinist, myself, as well as many services without any instrumental accompaniment. Neither the choir members nor the instrumentalists had any formal education in music. Moreover, only one of them was able to play a wide repertoire using the various facilities of his keyboard, such as different timbres, rhythmic variations, and the options to transpose the key of the melody. Among the instrumentalists who accompanied the choir, I was the only one who had any formal education in music. As an outsider, however, I was not trained in their “traditional” or “religious” music. It was clear that given the constraints on the choir and the community, the group was not expecting perfection or even advanced skill, but rather their main concern was to provide a continuous source of church music performance at the given stage of the migration.

In 2011, when the services were carried out at the small church next to St. Antoine Church in Beyoğlu, the choir was using a small room at the Chaldean-Turkish church for rehearsals. After they started to use St. Esprit Church at Harbiye, a bigger venue (Figure 3.2), for Sunday services, the rehearsals moved to a room in that church. The choir also held some of our rehearsals at Oratorio when the members were already there for the Saturday afternoon youth gatherings.



**Figure 3.2 :** St. Esprit Church (in some sources Cathedral, Url-11).

When I have started to conduct my field research in 2011, Sandra, a young Chaldean woman<sup>28</sup>, was responsible for “conducting” the choir, and my key informants Flona, Farah, and Manuela were new members of the group. “Conducting” the choir included covering some basic duties such as organizing the rehearsals, choosing the hymns to sing at each service, deciding the proper keys for each hymn et cetera. After Sandra’s departure for Sydney, Australia, Flona, because of her talent and knowledge, became the accepted “authority”. However, nobody has ever been assigned to such a duty officially.

The power relations that music creates will be one of the focus points of this chapter. However, in order to understand them, it is important to consider the role of musical talent and knowledge as cultural capital in gaining a position in the community and especially in becoming incorporated into networks.

### **3.2 Music as a Cultural Capital**

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu extends the idea of capital of Marxism to all forms of power, whether they be material, cultural, social, or symbolic. He categorizes them as cultural, social, or symbolic resources in order to maintain and enhance the positions of individuals and groups in the social order.

Bourdieu defines four generic types of capital: economic capital (money and property), cultural capital (cultural goods and services including educational credentials), social capital (acquaintances and networks), and symbolic capital (legitimation) (Swartz, 1997, p. 74). In spite of its autonomy, Bourdieu (1986) considers that “economic capital is at the root of all the other types of capital”; in this respect, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital are in fact “transformed, disguised forms of economic capital” (p. 252). Thus, all forms of capital are subordinate to economic capital. He also adds that these types of capital, which constitute power resources, can be converted into one another under certain conditions.

Among these four types of capital, cultural capital and social capital are also interchangeable means of accessing to sources of income in the labor market, in the

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<sup>28</sup> While I mentioning the youth of the community in Istanbul the age range is approximately 17-25. I only indicate the age of individuals whose age is not within this range.

form of educational credentials and in the form of social networks (Swartz, 1997, p. 80).

Cultural capital refers to non-financial social assets, which are gained by a member of a social community in her interaction with the other members. As Bourdieu (1986), describes in his article “The forms of capital”, there are three states of cultural capital. The first state refers to “the ensemble of cultivated dispositions that are internalized by the individual through socialization and that constitute schemes of appreciation and understanding. Cultural goods, Bourdieu notes, differ from material goods in that one can appropriate and ‘consume’ them only by apprehending their meaning” (Swartz, 1997, p. 76). This is true for music, works of art, and scientific formulas, as well as works of popular culture. This kind of cultural capital might consist of intellectual or artistic forms of knowledge or skills, which have the power to give the individual a higher status in the society. In the second state, cultural capital may exist as objects, as books, works of art, and scientific instruments, that require specialized cultural abilities to use. The third state refers to cultural capital, as it exists in the form of institutions, by which Bourdieu means “the educational credential system.” Bourdieu emphasizes the growth of the higher education system and the role it has come to play in the allocation of statuses in the advanced societies. Expanded higher education has created massive credential markets that reproduce the social class structure.

When we take music as a cultural capital of migrants, the most widespread appearance of it can be seen as the musical talent: the ability to play an instrument and being familiar with a certain musical style or repertoire. These can be considered as instances of the first type of cultural capital, and can provide some opportunities to join a social network. Moreover, for some cases, having a musical talent, ability or knowledge, or having a formal musical education can easily be changed into economic capital or can help the immigrant to be incorporated with the cultural and/or economic structures in the destination country.

I have encountered some cases in my field research that illustrate the impact of being familiar with a repertoire in the process of being incorporated into a social network. For example, a newcomer who is familiar with the religious repertoire of the culture of the homeland may enjoy a high status in the immigrant community, albeit she has no other qualifications. The cultural capital this newcomer possesses, in a

Bourdieuian sense, helps her gain a status within the hierarchy in the community. It can help her be incorporated into the local cultural area or the migrant social network as well. In this respect, the investigation of how cultural capital affects one's position in the power-relations, especially in the migrant network, is one of the pursuits of this study.

In addition, I encountered two cases that demonstrate the interchangeability of cultural to economic capital. Two professional Chaldean-Iraqi musicians, Sadeer and Stewart (a keyboard player and a singer respectively), came from Iraq in the summer of 2014. They soon met other Arab-Muslim Iraqi migrants in Istanbul found a job as musicians at an Arab restaurant. The restaurant is of the Arab restaurants near Taksim Square that caters to Middle Eastern tourists. We can see from this case that between the two groups of Middle Easterners in Istanbul, tourists and migrants, the latter serves the former in the service sector. The collaboration between the members of two Iraqi migrant communities, Christians and Muslims, is also noteworthy. Live music performances are one of the ways in which migrants serve tourists, and the repertoire includes Iraqi-specific and general Arabic popular and traditional music. In the case of Stewart and Sadeer, their musical knowledge and ability not only helped them incorporate themselves into a wider Middle Eastern migrant network, but also provided them a fulltime job and income.

### **3.3 The Cases of Incorporation into Network through Music**

During my field research in Istanbul I have experienced various cases in which music has a significant role in the acceptance or incorporation processes into the Chaldean migrant network and/or Chaldean network, musical knowledge and ability provides individuals with a high status among the community as well.

#### **3.3.1 Three newcomer sisters**

Three members of the choir were three newcomer sisters who not only had remarkable voices, but also a significant knowledge about the church repertoire. Previously, they had a religious education as assistant of the priest. Farah, Flona and



Manuela came from Zakho, Iraq<sup>29</sup> in August 2011 with their mother and brother Rami. When I met them they were in the middle of the application process to UN for transfer to Australia, where their extended family resides. They were eventually able to go in June 2014. They first had to live in Bilecik, one of the designated satellite cities, during their stay in Turkey. However, since they had some distant relatives and better employment opportunities in Istanbul, they stayed in Dolapdere instead, as many other Iraqi immigrants do.

Since they had been in Turkey from 1999 to 2001 and had watched Turkish TV channels until their second trip to Turkey, they were able to speak fluent Turkish. Flona and Rami's skills in Turkish and Arabic allowed them to find jobs in a transportation firm that works with Iraq; Farah first worked in a small textile factory then in a shop that sell products to mostly Arab costumers. They did not have working permit, so they did not have any social security. This, as discussed earlier, is a very common situation. In this regard, the distant relatives, the organizations, such as the church and Caritas, and the Iraqi migrant network had crucial roles in their daily lives in Istanbul.

Music served as a significant means for incorporation into the Chaldean migrant network for Flona, Rami, and Farah. They were members of church choir in Iraq and were musically trained at church. After they had arrived to Istanbul, they immediately started to attend to church services and realized that the church in Istanbul did not have regular choir performances. After one month, the three of them and two of their friends prepared a special repertoire for the next service, which was the feast of the cross. Fortunately, because there was no choir performance that day at the church, they could sing at the service. After the service, some members of the community showed their appreciation for the performance. Moreover, they were invited to become regular singers in the church choir. According to Flona, this opportunity let them meet many new friends, and it was an important step in terms of their acceptance into the network. In this case, being familiar with the church repertoire and having musical skills, such as a good voice, were the cultural capital of Flona. With the help of her two sisters, she was able to integrate into the migrant

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<sup>29</sup> Since the applications from Zakho are not accepted by the UN, in our first interview with Flona, at a very early level of our acquaintance, she told me that they came from Mosul. After months she and her sister told me their real story.

network. This is crucial for survival in Istanbul. Their cultural capital helped them create new social relationships; In other words, it transformed into social capital.

The field research I have conducted clearly shows that their talent and knowledge not only operated in incorporation, but also gave individuals a relative privilege in the community by making them popular among the youth and respectable among the elders.

### **3.3.2 Jan Dark**

Jan Dark, after the loss of her mother, father, and one of her brothers in Iraq, she came Istanbul with her two younger brothers from Zakho in August 2012. Soon after I had finished my regular field research, she left Istanbul for the US. Being a close friend of Flona and her sisters, she did not feel isolated from the community in Istanbul. But it is possible that her acceptance into the community had been facilitated by her appearance in the church choir. Since she was singing at and had trained in the church at Zakho, it was inevitable for her to sing in the local choir, especially when considering the weakness of the choir in Istanbul.

Jan Dark clearly states that she has gained a salient self-confidence in Istanbul. On one hand, it seems to be a result of the effect of migration on gender roles (see chapter II). On the other, her appearance in the choir had made possible a quick integration into the community with a relatively high status. More importantly, she became popular among young members. Through her duties at the church as a choir member, she was also able to find a job as a cook in house of Chaldean Iraqi priests. This provides a regular source of income for Jan Dark. Overall, both the social capital she gained through her musical ability, which is indeed her cultural capital as well, and her ability to cook, have provided her with what can be seen as a privileged economic status given her circumstances.

### **3.3.3 Related cases**

I also have witnessed some cases that demonstrate the significance the community attributes to the choir. In one of these cases, three young women around the age of 15 told Jan Dark, “we are so embarrassed, but want to ask a question: may we attend the choir?” It turns out they were very skilled and experienced members of another choir in Iraq, and obviously the choir in Istanbul had a clear need for members like them. But because the choir was so important in the community, as very young women, it

took almost five months to dare to ask this simple question. I also believe that their lack of courage is a sign the constructed power relations around the choir in Istanbul.

In another case, one of the significant male voices in the community, Yousif Ibrahim wanted to sing a solo hymn in one of the last weeks before his departure to Australia in December 2013. Solo singing is of great importance to the choir members, and it is even more important to the ones who consider themselves to be prospective musicians (see Chapter V). For those who sing solos at the church, the presence of an accompanist is inevitable for them. Yousif Ibrahim asked me to accompany him, so we worked together to select a hymn that would best demonstrate his singing abilities. During the week we were planning to perform, he lost one of his relatives and did not find it appropriate to sing at the church. However, we performed the hymn in his last week, as he requested.

### **3.3.4 Instrumentalists**

Musical knowledge as cultural capital has the potential to transform social or even economic capital in the migratory process. The former situation is clearly exemplified by church musicians. In this respect, the term “musicians” not only defines the singers in the choir, but also instrumentalists who accompany it. The musicians, especially the ones who perform the rituals, are crucial for the religious and spiritual life of the community. They usually occupy a special and often a respectable position in society. Alan Merriam is one of the earlier scholars who points out the special position musicians have in religious ritual. Merriam (1964), finding the position of the musician to be “ambiguous,” explains that while they make important religious services for the community possible, musicians stay in a low societal rank. However, as he notes, they gain a “license to deviate” (pp. 123-144). The examples observed in my field research among the church musicians do not exemplify having a “license to deviate,” but as I mention above, there is no doubt that, affecting the position to the musician, both from the viewpoint of the community and musician’s perception about herself, being a component of the church rituals gives a musician a “special” status.

#### **3.3.4.1 Milad**

When I met Milad, a former keyboard player of the church he was about to go to Australia. Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to talk to him again. However, the short conversation we had and the further information I gained from his friends made me think that Milad's relationship with music is worth mentioning.

He was in his early 20s and had been in Istanbul for three years. Even though he did not have any formal music education or training, he had played the keyboard at the church services in Istanbul for a year. He had a talent for music, and as an autodidact, he learned how to play the keyboard by “watching” another church musician in Iraq. While he was playing his electronic keyboard at the church, he mainly chose “the church organ” or a kind of wood wind instrument sound from its sound database. During the rehearsal, he easily played the melodies of the hymns with his right hand, and in most passages, he played a drone with the left one.

Even though when Milad started to play at the church he was already a member of the immigrant network in Istanbul, at our first conversation he stated that playing at the church gave him more respect from the community, new friends, a greater self-confidence, and a feeling of “being a part of something divine.”

#### **3.3.4.2 Jan**

Jan is another keyboard player at the church, after Milad. He is in his early 30s and came from Zakho in 2011 with his mother, wife, and sisters; in November of the following year they migrated to Australia. He was educated as an assistant of priest in a church in Iraq, and in his last three years there, he played the keyboard as well. He was not paid for this duty and as once he told me that certainly would not accept money even if offered.

Since he was a relative of Flona and her sisters, when he had come to Istanbul in August 2011 he contacted the choir directly, and they immediately asked him to play in the church. Jan's arrival to Istanbul was a good coincidence for them because they did not find Milad's musical knowledge and skills as sufficient to play at the church. Fortunately, Milad was about to leave when he arrived.

In fact, because of his training at a church in Iraq, Jan was easily selected for the role

of assistant of the priest at the church in Istanbul. However, thinking that playing in the choir, especially as a skilled musician, gave him a better reputation among the community, he preferred this position.

“If I would not play at the church I could be a vicar. I had been trained in church for 7-8 years. My brother is a priest in France, father François knows him. But playing at the church has introduced me to more members of the community and I gained respect. If I would be one of the vicars they would know me, but now more people knows because of the choir.” (May 21, 2012)

Aside from these musicians, I had met a young man, Wail, who was an amateur keyboardist. Due to his insufficient musical skills, the choir members did not want to let him play the whole Easter service, but they let him softly accompany the choir during some segments. I find it fitting to mention him in the context of my presence at the church because after the Easter service, he wanted to a photograph with me and we posed as if we were playing together. Seeing this photo as his Facebook cover photo soon afterward was not only surprising, but also informative about how the young community members who deal with music view me.

#### **3.3.4.3 Evrim**

My own experience as a musician is related to the role music had in my process of being accepted, if not into the community, but by the community. When I started to conduct my fieldwork in the church, I found the opportunity to participate in the services and rehearsals with the help of father Yakan. In the first months, I was seen as only a researcher of “something” that was irrelevant to the choir members. Even though they were quite kind allow me into their rehearsals, share their meals with, and offer other friendly gestures, I was clearly an outsider. But as soon as they learned I play the violin, they asked me to accompany them in their church services. After playing in some services together, all of the choir members, and at least some of the rest of the community members, accepted my presence as a member of the church. Thus, my starting to accompany them was a turning point for my position in the field. I not only went from the position of an observer to a participant-observer, I also became a “member” of the church choir; I essentially became an object of my own study. Briefly stated, the respect I gained from them was not from being a researcher on a field they are not familiar with, but because I play the violin; an instrument they really adore. My musical expertise allowed me to connect with them

on a deep level.

Even after I completed my field research at the church, it was necessary for me to accompany at the services. Firstly, having a rehearsal was the legitimate reason to attend their weekly gatherings at Oratorio. Secondly, while playing at the church, I became familiar with an increasing number of community members. Continuing at the church was necessary in order to keep the following stages of the field research outside of the church. And thirdly, they had attributed importance to my presence as an accompanist and believed that my participation enriched their performance; I could not disappoint them.

### **3.4 Creating Hierarchical Relationships through Music**

Both the potential of music as cultural capital, as discussed above, and my attendance at the church choir as a formally trained educated musician reveals another question about the creation of hierarchical relationships through music.

Music and musical performance is a field that not only reflects, but also reproduces social relations (Small, 1998, p. 183). Thus, there is no doubt that the process of musical production is dependent on the hierarchical power relations. Moreover, as mentioned above, musical skill and knowledge are two types of cultural capital that have the potential to create hierarchical relationships even among individuals who are more or less equal to each other in other aspects of life.

The organization of the choir can be viewed as an example of these relationships: There is no professional musician among the members, and, with the exception of a few, they do not have any formal musical education. Those who do were trained in various churches in Iraq.<sup>30</sup> In this respect, the only material they needed for the rehearsal was a notebook, which had handwritten notes and lyrics of dozens of church hymns. But they also needed members who have the knowledge of the church music tradition, a notion of the order for a proper ritual, and a good memory to remember and transmit the melodies orally. Eventually, those who had these

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<sup>30</sup> The only professional and/or formally educated musicians in the community were Sadeer and Stewart, who arrived Istanbul in the summer of 2014. I met them in November 2014, just after finishing my field study.

abilities, mostly the ones who did the same duty in churches in Iraq, gained a relative authority at the choir.

One can presume that there are some musical notations of the church music in the archives of the Chaldean-Turkish church as well as in some personal archives. However, as the priests I have interviewed have stated, there are no hymnbooks that contain musical notation of the Chaldean liturgical music in Istanbul; those books are only available in Iraq. Even though there are hymn notations in Iraq, the choir members who came from Iraq certainly do not have those books and they did even not learn the hymn repertoire from them.

Because the music they perform at the church is transmitted orally both in Iraq and in Istanbul, being a transmitter of this traditional knowledge is given great significance by the community. As it is widely accepted in both musicology and ethnomusicology, musical notation does not provide an exact data for musical performance. Musicologist Nicholas Cook (2000) states, "Notation conserves music then, but it conceal as much as it reveals" (p. 55). In this respect, having a musical notation without the knowledge of traditional performance would not be effective.

Beyond the knowledge of the liturgical singing, basic musical talent of remembering a melody and repeating it clearly has an important role in oral transmission. This basic musical ability, in other words a good musical ear, seems to be an indispensable necessity of singing in a choir. One can presume that the members who have the knowledge of the liturgy also possess this skill. Nevertheless, some of the choir members in Istanbul did not have this ability at all.<sup>31</sup> However, they were allowed to sing in the choir because of the how small the choir was and the desperate need for singers. Moreover, the ones who had a weak musical ability were not only the choir members; as I observed, some of the acolytes also did not have an ability to sing a hymn thoroughly in a single constant key. In such a case, the ones who had both the knowledge discussed above and musical ability were irreplaceable for the community in Istanbul.

All choir members were well aware of the fact that some members did not have a satisfactory musical ability to sing the hymns in the same key with the rest of the

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<sup>31</sup> It is apparent in some of the musical examples on DVD.

ensemble. However, they acted as if they were unaware that was the case. Even so, from 2011 to 2012, I witnessed some of these “low-skilled” members quit the choir. When I dug out the reasons, I was told that Sandra, a former member of the choir who was responsible of the rehearsals during that period, did not inform them anymore about the rehearsal schedule. It was a decision of Sandra and had not been discussed among the other members.

When I started to conduct my field research in September 2011, Sandra was the person to whom I directed of my questions on the order and schedule of the rehearsals. She was the main authority in the choir on aspects that included the timing of rehearsals, choosing hymns, the keys, and the soloists. At first, it seemed to me that she had an official position in the church. I learned that she is one of the oldest members of the choir, and she works as an interpreter for a Chaldean organization. On basis of this, she had informally taken over the responsibility of choir. In this first year, I witnessed a small argument between her and some members of the choir. Soon after their attendance to the choir, as a result of these arguments, Flona and her sisters quit the choir, stating that they did not like Sandra’s attitude towards them. In our conversations, Flona, Farah, and Jan stated that Sandra took her position “too seriously” and behaved “as if she is a priestess.” They were thinking that there was a power struggle between her and them related to musical abilities; they were as skilled and experienced as Sandra, so she did not like their attendance in the choir. Even though I am not in a position to evaluate these statements about her behavior, I can admit that she was quite kind to me, but she never directly invited me to any rehearsal.

The main agenda of the choir rehearsals was selecting the hymns for the next service and preparing to sing them. Since the members came from different regions, there were subtle differences among the repertoire they were familiar with. In addition, there were some conflicts on the musical representations of some certain hymns. Before Jan’s participation, Sandra was the final arbitrator in all kinds of conflicts, and she was the one who made the final decision during disputes. However, after he began to participate, Jan made the decisions about musical aspects, such as tonality and singing style (antiphonal, *tutti* or *solo*), even sometimes making the choir members to sing the hymns one by one at the rehearsals to choose the soloists. Even though Jan, as a modest person, did not attempt to take over the responsibility, since



he was the most knowledgeable member of the choir, there was obviously a shift of the authority that happened naturally. It is important to note that I do not think that gender relations had any kind of determining role in the organization of the choir; the determining factor was musical ability.

After Sandra left for Australia, Flona, her sisters, and then Jan Dark took over the “duty” of being in charge of the choir, and until Jan quit the choir due to some health issues just before his departure from Turkey in November 2013, they had a harmonious working relationship with him. Since four of them had more or less the same talent and knowledge, nobody among them directly intended to take the main authority. Flona, being more sociable than Farah, older and more experienced than Manuela, and having come to Istanbul before Jan Dark, could be seen as a leading character. As opposed to Jan Dark, her ability to speak Turkish was also useful to communicate with me, as an accompanist, during the rehearsals and with the church officers from Chaldean-Turkish community.

Obviously, neither Flona nor the others intended to create a hierarchy among the members similar to the one before. For instance, some relatively incapable members kept continuing to attend the choir, and I had not witnessed any negative behavior towards them. On the contrary, beside these four members, a female and a male member who were quite weak in terms of musical talent became almost the only constant members of the choir. But of course avoidance from hierarchical relationships does not mean that they are not reproduced. The tension among the choir had been disappeared after Sandra’s departure, however, Flona, her sisters, and Jan Dark were clearly became the main arbitrators on the main agenda of the rehearsals. They gained this “natural” position based on their musical abilities.

### **3.5 Presence of an Outsider Professional**

My attendance as a musician, in a certain respect, creates a distinct example of gaining a certain level of power through musical ability. At the beginning, François Yakan had seen me as an instructor who could train the choir members in order to increase the quality of the performance. Kindly refusing this position, I avoided being seen as an instructor. Fortunately, other choir members, having a strong familiarity with church music, were quite aware that I was an outsider who could not teach them their own music. Even though I was not viewed as a teacher, I had been

treated like a music authority among the choir and the other young members of the community. When Janan, a young, talented vocalist, asked me how to train his voice, he was viewing me as a guide. In the end, a young man, Danyal, called the choir members as my “students” on the Christmas Eve (see Appendix A).

Another surprising development happened just after I had completed my fieldwork. During an interview with a Chaldean-Turkish priest who conducts many of the services at the migrant Chaldean church in October 2014, he asked me to help by playing the violin for their future special ceremonies. He informed me that they were working on creating a new church choir in the migrant Chaldean church after many of the former members departed from Turkey. One of the very special events he mentioned was the Pope’s visit to the church in Istanbul in the near future. Their request for my performance at the church for such a significant occasion demonstrates their willingness to enrich and continue the tradition by using all options available.

My attendance in the performances also has had significant effects on the music itself. As a musician trained in Western polyphonic music, playing their hymns, which are mostly based on *maqam* structure and musically quite close to “traditional” or popular music of the region certainly created some irretrievable “harm” to the music. Taking into consideration that these hymns constitute a significant element of the ritual and the preservation of “authenticity” of the culture is a delicate issue, my participation seems problematic. It also raises some questions on their attitude towards preserving the “authenticity” of the church repertoire that I discuss below.

A basic example clearly shows the effect of my attendance to the hymn performances. When I accompanied the choir, adding an instrumental introduction to each hymn was necessary in order to give the key of the hymn to the choir. Nevertheless, since I had learned the hymns just before the services, in many cases it was not easy for me to remember certain melodies, tempos, or rhythms.

Among the examples which I made some involuntary changes, the transcription of hymn *Ekbal Takal Matina* (قېل تقيديمتنا) clearly shows that even though the time signature of the piece is in simple meter (2/4), my instrumental introduction (1.-8. bars) are played as if it was in a compound one. Moreover, my playing affected the singing of the choir, which can be seen in the musical recording of the hymn (sound example is on DVD).



**Figure 3.3 :** Hymn: Ekbal Takal Matina.

A more “harmful” effect of my attendance can be seen in the examples that include microtonal intervals on the DVD.

In order to avoid damaging the music of the community, avoiding extra ornamentations, changing the tune according to my musical or technic preferences, et cetera, I mainly tried to be musically “invisible”. In this respect, “musical invisibleness” as a concept is worth discussing. It means attempting to reduce my musical personality and to not dare to enter another musical world. On the other hand, it also means not playing in the “limits of appropriateness” of either of the musical styles. For instance, they usually wanted to have a second microphone for the violin during the ceremony and kindly asked me to play louder even when they sing their part. If I were playing softer than they ask, it was probably not only because of my musical concerns as an accompanist, but also because of my hesitation of directing the performance with my inadequate musical knowledge of this specific musical tradition.

### **3.6 Maintaining Culture by Performing Music**

It was obvious that, as an outsider, I am not capable of playing their music in an “authentic” way, and my participation in the performance causes an indispensable standardization. However, it cannot be said that by requesting my participation in the performance, even for the most important religious events such as Easter and Christmas, that they were acting against a basic principle: protecting their culture.

Jan, who had the same duty as a keyboard player at a church in Iraq for three years, declared that there is not any difference between his previous and current

playing styles. Likewise, they were very insistent to protect the lyrics of the church repertoire. I have witnessed a debate on the issue between the choir members, and some officials of Chaldean-Turkish church know a different set of lyrics for some children's hymns. Apart from that, my comparison of the musical examples which I recorded at the field to the more recent "original" versions recorded in Iraq on internet show that there is not a remarkable difference between the Chaldean Iraqi church music examples in Istanbul and in Iraq.

On the other hand, they had a perception that church music without instrumental accompaniment is not as effective as it should be. The use of keyboard in the church for accompaniment is widespread in Iraq. As François Yakan told, especially before the use of electronic keyboard, Chaldeans were playing any other folk instruments they could find at the Chaldean Church. Thus, for the community, instrumental accompaniment at the church is desirable and, from the first day we performed together, they were very willing for me to accompany them. This attitude also can be seen in their insistence that the choir hire a keyboard player as a second instrumentalist for the Christmas ceremony.<sup>32</sup>

Considering these facts, one can understand their willingness to welcome me as a strategy developed during this phase of their migration in order to survive and maintain their musical culture in a broader sense. In this respect, I do not see the preservation as one of the main concerns of the community during this phase; at least there is not any conscious attempt for that. Because of their fresh memories, the culture is still very alive. Therefore, their emphasis is not on the protecting the culture but rather on maintaining the culture by preserving the performance styles, et cetera.

Undoubtedly one of the most significant needs of this transit migrant community is having a feeling of being in safe; the assurance that is nothing change in their daily life. Being symbols of safeness, constancy and order, religion and religious practices are important elements of traditional order (Ihlamur-Öner, 2012, p. 320). However, as I have mentioned in the context of religious networks in previous chapter, these practices can give room to change in order to satisfy the need of the migrant as well.

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<sup>32</sup> As they think that a keyboard can make music richer and louder they wanted to hire a Turkish professional keyboard player but they could not arrange it.

In other words, while maintaining their culture, they do not exclude some new material from their practices simply to guarantee the continuity of their culture. Through this lens, we can better understand their willingness for the accompaniment of an outsider musician.

### **3.7 The Religious Repertoire**

The hymn repertoire of the Chaldean Catholic Church consists of Chaldean and Arabic hymns. Even though Chaldeans accepted Catholicism in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, because the Chaldean Church is an Eastern Church, it has a particular liturgical setting for the service that is not unique to the Catholic Church and has common elements with the other Eastern Churches.<sup>33</sup> For instance, while conducting my research in both Lebanon and Houston, Texas, I witnessed that the liturgical similarity with the Maronite Church allows Chaldean people to feel free to attend the services at Maronite churches if they do not have a closer Chaldean Church option.

Even though there are specific hymns for the daily prayers of the church, in this study I directly deal with the hymn repertoire that is sung at the community services, including weekly Sunday services,<sup>34</sup> specific services for holidays, and the daily community services every afternoon that a small number of the members attend.

The Chaldean Church in Iraq has a wide hymn repertoire. Even though a common repertoire is known in every local church, it is not surprising that some regions have specific preferences for certain hymns. My field study has showed that this localized nature of churches can have a great affect on the repertoire that is sung in the transit land. All the members of the Chaldean migrant choir are from different regions of Iraq, such as Mosul, Bagdad and Zakho, are familiar with the diverse traditions in the Iraqi Chaldean church in the homeland. Indeed, as I have witnessed many occasions, young members from different regions, even if they were former choir members, were not familiar with some of the hymns the others know.

Takes into the consideration that they came from different regions, one can assume that they combine the repertoires of different local churches to create a pool, which is

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<sup>33</sup> For detailed information on the Chaldean Liturgy and its relations with the other Eastern liturgical traditions, see Albayrak, 1997.

<sup>34</sup> Named as Bread-Wine ritual, *Qurbana*, Holly Communion, *Asay Rabbani* Ritual, or *Kudas* Ritual.

wider than each member's personal knowledge. However, this diversity in fact causes homogenization because of the necessity of choosing common hymns, which forces the choir to compromise by only performing the songs everyone knows or can learn easily. Besides that, in some occasions the active, talented, and knowledgeable members of the choir, especially those who came from the same region, decided on the hymns for the following service and learned them by singing and writing the lyrics for the other members during the rehearsal.

As a result, the choir in Istanbul is capable of singing a relatively limited repertoire compared to the ones at many churches in Iraq. Ethnomusicologists Ursula and Kurt Reinhard (2007) demonstrated a similar process in which heterogeneity transforms into homogeneity in the musical practices of Turkish migrants in Germany (p. 131). When I ask Jan about the narrowness of the repertoire they perform, he said, "You hit the bull's eye!" According to him, the choir is not keen to learn new hymns (May 21, 2012). This mindset is also valid for the previous period before the three sisters' and Jan's arrival. During the first period, I observed the hymns were more or less the same in each service. After their attendance in the choir, I observed some variation in the repertoire they sang. However, indeed, it was not varied, but rather another narrow selection since these three active members of the choir brought the repertoire they were familiar with. Nonetheless, I do not think that they are reluctant to learn new hymns. Controversially, they demonstrated their openness in their willing to sing newly composed hymns that were circulated by their friends in the homeland (see Appendix A).

### **3.7.1 The hymn repertoire**

The hymn repertoire consists of a variety of hymns, which were either composed during various periods of the Chaldean history or adopted from different cultures, such as Egyptian, Persian, Turkish, Ottoman, and Maronite traditions. The musical examples on the DVD consist the hymns I have collected during my field research at the church. In order to classify my examples, I appealed to help of my informants and a Chaldean-Turkish priest, who is seen as one of the most knowledgeable people on Chaldean church music in Istanbul. Unfortunately none of them were able to give technical information on *maqam* or *usul* in church music. According to information they gave, the relatively old, and in some cases ancient, hymns are musically rooted from the traditional music of the community, and some of them are based on the

*maqam* tradition. The priest's conceptualization of *maqam* corresponds to the Iraqi *maqam* conceptualization (Hassan, 2002), and does not consider the *maqam* concept to be independent from the *usul* and the melodic patterns. According to my analysis, among the *maqam* scales that are used in the Chaldean hymn repertoire, *Husseini* (*Hüseyni*), *Kurd* (*Kürdi*) and *Hijaz* (*Hicaz*) are the most commonly used.<sup>35</sup> However, it is important to note that the use of *maqam* in the hymn examples I collected are not similar to the use of the *maqam* concept in Ottoman/Turkish traditional art music. In these examples, the use of *maqams* rather resembles the use in Anatolian folk music, and the only similarities with the classical Ottoman/Turkish *maqam* concept are in the scales and not in the progress or the inner operations that the *maqam* requires. Moreover, in some examples, the whole scales are not used; the hymns show only a narrow part, usually one octave, of the *maqam* scale.

In order to be able to play the microtonal intervals that *maqams* require, the keyboardist uses a special button; by slightly sliding the button while playing a special note, he provides microtones. Nevertheless, according to my observations, since it does not provide an effective performance and not all performers are able to use this facility, keyboard accompaniment usually causes the loss of the microtonal intervals that *maqams* require. In the case of the musical performance of Iraqi-Chaldean church in Istanbul, my inadequate accompaniment in the *maqam*-based hymns was another reason for this loss.

In addition, as the priest states, the repertoire also consists of a vast number of hymns that have the same melodic pattern, and even though these hymns are based on different lyrics, they can be identified with the name of the melody itself.

An example of the old Chaldean hymns that are based on a *maqam* scale is a hymn for Virgin Mary: *Mushtaquina min Lebakh* (مشتاقيني من لباخ) (sound example is on DVD) in the Chaldean language.

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<sup>35</sup> Since making a wide comparison among the *maqam* systems of Assyrian-Chaldean, Arabic, and Ottoman/Turkish music traditions is out of the content of this study, I only use Ottoman/Turkish *maqams* to explain my musical examples.



**Figure 3.4 :** Hymn: Mushtaqina min lebakh. The pitches used in the hymn do not constitute a whole maqam scale, however the resemblance with *Huseyni maqam* is clearly seen.



**Figure 3.5 :** The notes used in the hymn.



**Figure 3.6 :** Maqam Huseyni.

A second group of hymns consists of relatively newly composed pieces that are musically very close to the popular music of the region and the neighboring countries. There are many examples in this group are directly produced by using popular songs from Iraq or Turkey. For example, one of them takes its melody from a Turkish TV serial, *Dudaktan Kalbe*. After watching the TV series, a young woman named Salwa<sup>36</sup>, who lives in Iraq, took one of the main themes of Toygar Işıklı's music from the soundtrack and added some holly lyrics. Another example is the hymn based on an instrumental composition of Göksel Baktagir, a well-known *kanun*

<sup>36</sup> Salwa, a young composer and singer, came to Turkey as a tourist in 2013, but since I was in the US, could not meet her.



(zither) player and composer from Turkey (Url-13). My informants also mentioned some other hymns that are based on famous songs of Ibrahim Tatlıses. The Chaldean-Turkish priest I have interviewed calls these hymns “in arabesque *maqam*,” making apparent his criticism of use of popular, especially arabesque, music in the Chaldean church (October 22, 2014).

These examples occur in the homeland because of the intersecting musical spheres of Turkey and Iraq that are created by multifaceted cultural and economic relationships throughout history. Examples of this kind of fusion can be seen in diaspora cultures as well. Likewise, Ruth F. Davis (2010), in her study on the Jews of Dierba in Tunis, shows how popular songs were frequently adapted to Hebrew religious texts in 1920s, and this musical repertoire has been remained static since. Similarly, after her migration to Australia with her family, Flona sent me an Indian popular love song, saying that, they made it a hymn by writing lyrics on the song. They asked me to play it by the violin and send them the recording so that Manuela can sing it on it.

While the ongoing violence and displacement in the homeland directs the community to create new cultural products in order to express their inner feelings, the outcomes have not only secular, but religious content as well. Soon after, hymns composed in Iraq immediately spread to both the transit and destination countries, usually via the Internet and personal transmission. This interconnectedness among the global Chaldean-Iraqi communities reveals the transnational character of Chaldean migration that will be further discussed in Chapter IV. These new hymns show the continuity and dynamism of the Chaldean tradition in the homeland. This is quite significant given the current situation of Chaldean culture in Iraq, which has lost a large percentage of its population due to migration and still strongly feels the risk of the death of their culture in the homeland.

The migrants in Istanbul are informed about new musical products from the homeland via their friends in Iraq. The hymn on DVD (Track 4) is an example of a newly composed hymn by Salwa. In the recorded example, a choir member played an amateur recording, which had Salwa’s voice, from her cellphone during a rehearsal. Among the hymns in the appendix B, the hymn *Barken omsalen* (ومصالن برکن) is also a hymn composed by Salwa. The lyrics express remorse and ask for forgiveness in the Chaldean language. It is sung on the Holy Thursday or Friday before resurrection (for sound example see DVD).



**Figure 3.7 :** Hymn: Barken omsalen. The last four bars of the hymn clearly show some new tendencies in composing.

The lyrics of another hymn, *Yer anum alatfal* (ال يرنم الاطف) show that it has been added to the religious repertoire in recent years, or at most decades, as an outcome of the sufferings in the country. In most of the performances of this hymn by the Chaldean-Iraqi church choir I have witnessed, the congregation joined the singing. The first time I encountered the hymn was the Easter Holiday in 2011, and the hymn was chosen because of the mournful feelings it evokes. This is a hymn in Arabic, and it means "Sing Children." The lyrics are the evidence of that it's a now one: "Sing children, sing with your friends/ praise the god with happiness and glory/ suffering and tears spent our patience/ they killed our love with wars/ our prayers are for Iraq, dear God" (on DVD).

In the repertoire, there are other hymns that are adopted from Maronite, Latin, or Egyptian Protestant churches. Since these relations have a long history and the original works also have religious content, these hymns constitute a third group. These examples usually are clearly distinguishable based on their musical features. An example from the group adopted from the Latin Church is the hymn named *Almajdu* (المجد لك). (see Appendix B).



**Figure 3.8 :** Hymn: Almadju.

Even though the 7<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale is not used in the melody, the resemblance to Major scale is obvious. The repeated patterns (sequences) in 9-11 and 15-17 are also widely used in the tonal harmony.



**Figure 3.9 :** The notes used in the hymn consists an A Major scale without a 7<sup>th</sup> degree.

### 3.8 Resistance to Change

“Resistance to change” can be considered to be one of the most remarkable attitudes of transit migrant communities that do not establish a permanent life in the new arrival, but rather consider themselves as temporary passengers. Ethnomusicologist Adelaide Reyes’ study on Vietnamese refugees (1999) is one of the very few examples in the ethnomusicology field on transit migration. She conducted long-term field work and traced the entire journey from a camp of first asylum on the Philippine island of Palawan, through a point of imminent departure at the Philippine Refugee Processing Center in Bataan, to two resettlement communities: one in New Jersey, and the other in Orange County, California. Her study demonstrates that being a transit migrant has a great impact on the tendency of to preserve or resist change. The study showed that as long as migrants are in a state of transit, they tend to preserve their musical culture as much as possible. However, after settling in a destination country, they begin to produce new musical forms.

Adding to that, Bailey and Collyer (2006) state that, “[m]usical genres which are especially resistant to change in the immigrant situation are likely to be forms of music which have a clear ritual role. [...] For the ritual to be effective it must be performed in precisely the prescribed manner, and that includes as far as possible maintaining unchanged” (p.174). However, if we consider musical performances in the Chaldean migrant church in Istanbul in this respect, we face a more complex picture. Both interviews with the members of the Chaldean migrant church choir and a comparison between the musical examples that I recorded and the original versions on the Internet show that there are no remarkable structural differences between the Chaldean Iraqi church music examples in Istanbul and in Iraq. A similar singing style and the use of Western instruments, usually the electronic keyboard, can be seen in both. The examples of the Chaldean hymns that one can find on the Internet video sharing sites are the ones that were recorded in professional studios and professionally arranged with multiple instruments, or mostly midi sounds of multiple instruments. These examples are based on different musical styles, from smooth jazz to Latin bolero (see an example Url-14).<sup>37</sup> Hence, discussing the concept of authenticity in a musical tradition that has already adopted various musical features from other cultures is a complex issue. In this respect, resistance to change cannot be discussed fully, even in the religious musical examples of a transit community. In addition, providing the continuity of a culture in a state of transit can create the need to accept some innovations, even in the religious musical practices.

### **3.9 Innovation in Church Music**

As it has been stated above, Chaldean church music does not exclude musical innovations. Using the electronic keyboards already brings some new accompaniment possibilities that vary with the keyboard’s capabilities (such as rhythmic accompaniment or the usage of different musical instrument sounds). Besides that, according to Jan, since they tend to present some innovations to the church community in Iraq, adding some elaborations to ancient hymns, especially for the holidays, is a quite common practice (May 21, 2012).

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<sup>37</sup> This hymn also can be found among the collected examples on DVD (Track 8).

Similarly, the church in Istanbul is open to musical renewal. According to Jan, the main concern for Father François is the continuity of the rite (May 21, 2012). Jan's statement was also confirmed when François Yakan supported me playing the violin at the church and the choir and the whole community accepted me.

While comparing the features of the church music repertoire in Iraq and in Istanbul, Jan explained that if there is a difference in the music between these churches, it is not because of the musical attitude of the choir, but rather its ability. The choir in Iraq, which he accompanied on the keyboard, was capable of singing in a polyphonic style. He described that they were singing two, four or even four parts (polyphonically), and antiphonally in unison. In Istanbul, the performance is only in unison and rarely antiphonal. Antiphonal singing requires two different choirs for call and response. In Istanbul, because of the small size of the choir, it is very rare to divide choir between male and female singers. However, for some special prayers they use antiphonal singing style between acolytes and the choir. During my field study, I have witnessed an attempt to sing in two parts polyphonically only once, but since only one member could sing the second part they quickly changed their mind.<sup>38</sup> Even though it was not possible for them to sing polyphonically, members of the choir stated that they adore polyphonic singing. Because of this, the members of Iraqi-Chaldean church choir admire the performances of the community that uses the church after them<sup>39</sup> on Sundays, which has a choir capable of singing polyphonically.

Besides their interest in polyphonic singing, their high regard for highly elaborated accompaniment styles gives an idea on their perception of music aesthetics. The elaborations are not only musical ornamentations that constitute a large part of Arab music, but are also extra elements for the implemented melody.

The performances of a professional and formally educated newcomer musician, Sadeer, at the rehearsals for the special service for Pope Francis in November 2014 confirms Jan's statement in terms of musical elaborations and the use of Western

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<sup>38</sup> Just after I finished my field study formerly, the newly established choir for the visit of Pope Francis in November 2014 sung some short polyphonic (two part) sections in two hymns in the special service that Pope attended.

<sup>39</sup> It is a community mostly consists migrants from African countries and Philippines. The language of their service is English.

harmony -even in the hymns are in *Hijaz* and *Bayati maqams*. Figure 3.10 shows his notes on the lyrics of the hymns we played at the service.

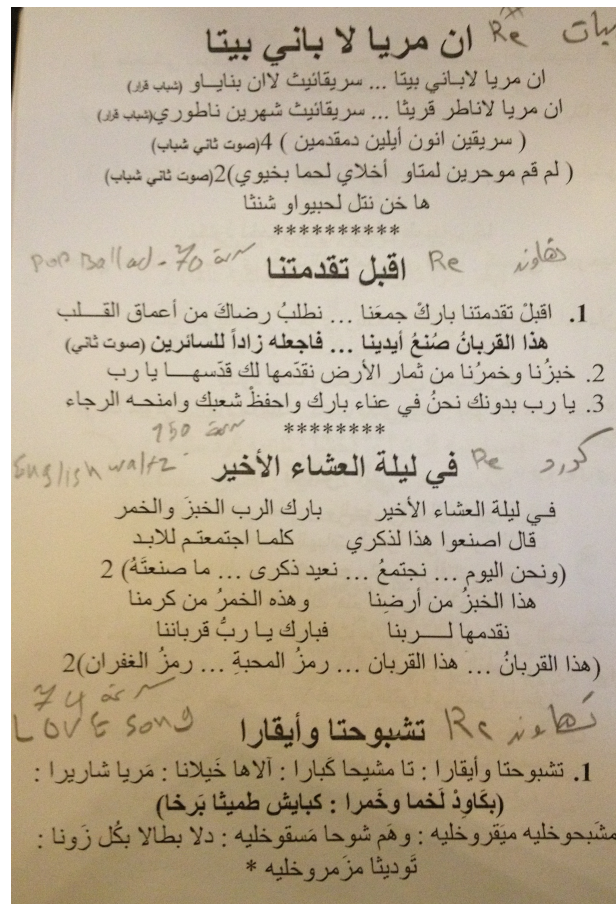


Figure 3.10 : Notes of Sadeer.

The notes on the right show the *maqams* of the hymns (the first is *Bayat*, the third is *Kurd* et cetera). The notes on the left show the tempo and the appropriate playing style on the keyboard (the second is 70, “pop ballad”, the third is 150 “English waltz” et cetera).

The keyboardists use ready rhythmic patterns on the keyboard and chordal accompaniment<sup>40</sup> of the left hand. Even Jan, the most capable keyboard player of the community I have meet during my field study, was an autodidact, and he was adding this left hand accompaniment by ear, on some occasions randomly.

<sup>40</sup> By “chordal accompaniment” I mean an accompaniment based on basic 5th chords on left hand. But even in the cases that the hymn is based on a tonal (Major or minor) scale, the accompaniment does not precisely follows the basic principals of Western harmony.

I observed that since Milad, the former keyboard player, was not capable of using these facilities on the instrument or any chordal accompaniment with his left hand, the choir members found his playing ability to be insufficient. When I asked to my informants to make a comparison between Milad's and his predecessor Jan's performance on the keyboard accompaniment, they stated that Jan's use of some ready rhythmic patterns is more effective and "sophisticated." In order to obtain this ability, Jan paid for than a thousand dollars for a new keyboard<sup>41</sup> in Istanbul.<sup>42</sup>

Similarly, I felt that they preferred for me to play in a middle register with ornamentations and heavily emphasized musical phrases. If the hymn was suitable for this, I did so in the rehearsals and they gave applauses after the performance. Thus, it is probable they did not like my preference to generally stay "invisible" in musical performances as much as possible.

I should note an opposite approach from a Chaldean ethnomusicology PhD student who studies Chaldean liturgical music in Italy. Noelle is a member of the small Chaldean community in Lebanon. When we met in Lebanon in March 2013, she took my Iraqi friend Jumanah and I to a Chaldean church in Babdha. The Chaldean community in Lebanon is quite small, and many of them prefer the closer Maronite churches because of the resemblances between the liturgies.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, in Houston where there is no Chaldean church, the Chaldean migrants attend the weekly services at the Maronite church.

When we met the Chaldean church in Babdha it was the March 22, 2013, the Friday before the Easter. The ceremony was a special one that symbolizes *Via Dolorosa*, the journey of Jesus to Mount Golgotha with his cross on his backside. The congregation was very small. They were sitting in a mix-gendered order like in Maronite Churches, which is different than in Istanbul. At the beginning, the choir was also very small, but then 10-15 young people -mostly women- came and attended the choir.

The ritual was based on a repetition where three women carried a big cross and walked around the auditorium alongside the priest, an acolyte walked with them

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<sup>41</sup> A Korg PA 60.

<sup>42</sup> But unfortunately, he could not take it with him to Australia, and then they asked me help to sell it.

<sup>43</sup> There are only two Chaldean churches in Lebanon.

while he was swinging a censer. They stopped in almost each four-five meters symbolizing the fourteen stations at which Jesus stopped. They repeat the same prayers and choir sang the same short passage in each step.

Noelle negatively reacted to the musical elaborations of the keyboard player/conductor of the choir. Moreover, she did not approve their polyphonic (two parts) singing. She explained how had she repeatedly warned him, but he answered by saying they were keeping up with the time.

According to Noelle, the community should preserve the “authenticity” of the church music repertoire. “There are thousands of Maronite Churches in Lebanon, and it is understandable that they try different singing styles, use polyphony, and various instruments. Because they still have some churches that preserve the traditional style. But since we have only two Chaldean Churches here, we do not have the same luxury, we need to protect the culture” (March 22, 2013).

As a specialist, she immediately recognized the hymns and told me that one of them was not of Chaldean origin, but probably entered the repertoire from the Maronite liturgy. When we consider that, even in the homeland, the Chaldean church music repertoire is open to influences from other religious traditions, this statement confirms her worries. After the ceremony, there was a rehearsal of the choir, but she could not stand to listen the music they perform because of its “degeneration,” and we left.

I have witnessed a similar reaction in Istanbul during my interview with the Chaldean-Turkish priest. According to him, “the former choir [the one I have studied with] was not regarding religious singing properly. They were knowledgeable and had good voices, but their singing style was better suited for popular music; the playing style of Jan, as well. He was playing as if he is in a night club, but playing in the church suppose to require a dignity” (October 22, 2014). When I remind him that Jan was performing his duties in the same manner in Iraq, he replied by saying this is a problem among the young members in everywhere. “They are under the influence of popular music and the *arabesk* music of Turkey”.

However, the concerns of Noelle and the priest about preserving “authenticity” do not correspond to the musical tastes of my informants in Istanbul. It is because the choir members in Istanbul do not have a large concern about preserving their culture



because it is already very lively for them. In this special phase of their migration, they do not have any concern other than continuing their music. It is possible that the members of the choir in Baabda also are not concerned about losing their culture because of their high attachment or even assimilation into the Maronite culture. Moreover, it is obvious that especially young members are highly involved in the musical universe of our globalized world, not only in the countries to which they migrated, but also in the homeland (see Chapter IV).

### **3.10 Interactions with the Chaldean-Turkish Church through Music**

The limited capability of the choir, especially in comparison with the choirs in the homeland, is widely accepted by the choir members and the other members of the community. Jan once stated, “I feel deeply ashamed when they [the choir] sing poorly” (May 21, 2012). Since the quality of the performance changes according to the availability of skilled singers and at least one accompanist, it was not easy for them to reach a sustainable quality in the given situation. Indeed, the insufficiency of their performance is the direct result of their transit situation in Istanbul. On the contrary, the Chaldean communities in the destination countries have the potential of having a wider population; as a result, well-established churches have more qualified choirs.

The Chaldean-Turkish Church in Istanbul, as well as having a very small congregation, does not have a choir or a young generation who is even familiar with the church music repertoire. Some incidents that I have personally observed clearly show how church music is important for both Iraqi and Turkish-Chaldean communities, and how music operates in creating and developing a relationship between them. In February 2012, after a Sunday service of the Chaldean migrants, a Chaldean-Turkish woman came to the place for the choir and asked if the women members of the choir could sing some hymns in Chaldean language for a special service for women that had been organized by Chaldean-Turkish community on the week of March 8<sup>th</sup>.<sup>44</sup> During our conversation, she added that they certainly did not have any overtly feminist reasons for this, but they just wanted to show that there

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<sup>44</sup> International Women’s Day.

were women in the community. Since the church of the Chaldeans from Turkey does not have a choir, it was neither the first nor the last time contribution from the migrants was demanded. The second case I have encountered was a Baptism of a child from a Chaldean family from Turkey.

Another incident happened after a Sunday service at the Chaldean migrant church I attended as a musician. While we were in the garden of the church with some choir members, François Yakan asked me to play in the “central church” (the Church of Chaldean-Turkish community in Taksim) from time to time. After that, he invited the choir of the migrants to singing at the Christmas ceremony. Lastly, the Chaldean-Turkish church officials created a choir of Chaldean-Iraqi youth for the special service for the visit of Pope Francis in November 2014, and the choir represented the Chaldean Church in Turkey.

These cases present the vitality, liveliness, and dynamism, which the migrant community brings to the Chaldean-Turkish Church through religious music. They also show how musical performance is desirable for Chaldean-Turkish community in order to refresh their relation with their genuine culture. Considering this positive effect of the migrant Chaldeans on the Chaldean-Turkish community in Istanbul, and keeping in mind that aside from the transit route, there is not any Chaldean migration from Iraq to Turkey, one can assume that temporary hosting Chaldeans from Iraq is also very important for the local Chaldean community.

#### **4. LISTENING PATTERNS OF YOUNG MEMBERS**

Although music consumption and listening habits have a significant place in popular music studies, ethnomusicology literature on migrant and diaspora communities mostly focuses on the music-making processes and the production itself. The creation of new and hybrid forms and genres constitutes the main field of research in migration ethnomusicology. However, in fact, one can assume that studying not just the process of production, but also the consumption and reception produces an unparalleled opportunity to develop an understanding of the meaning-making process of cultures through music. In this regard, in the following chapters my focus will be on these both dimensions; respectively on listening and performing/producing.

Since Toynbee and Dueck (2012) remind us in the introductory chapter of their compilation, "Migrating Music", "[O]f course, not all migrants are musicians, let alone professionals who sell recordings and concert tickets. Even fewer are successful enough to make living primarily through such activities." Hence, like them, in these following two chapters I focused on "amateurs as well as experts, and listeners as well as performers" (p. 1).

Attending the weekly gatherings at Oratorio and various special celebrations, such as weddings, engagements, birthdays, and New Year parties, and watching the video recordings of these events, I have collected a wide range of data on the listening habits of the young Chaldean migrants in Istanbul. In addition to that, being friends with them on online social-networking services, such as Facebook, I have also had the chance to observe their daily online musical listening and music sharing activities. In addition to that, formal interviews and numerous informal conversations have helped me develop an understanding on their perception of musical aesthetic, and the meaning they attribute to the musical productions to which they listen, sing, or share.

The personal contacts I have developed with the young community members have directed me to ask a basic question: What would musically represent being a member of a transit migrant community?

It is a widely accepted fact that music provides a space in which the processes of self-representation and identity formation can operate. Musical practices are not only a means to declare the “self,” but also a tool to search its limits and variability. Citing music sociologist Tia De Nora (2004), “[M]usic can be used as a device for the reflexive process of remembering/constructing who one is, a technology for spinning the apparently continuous tale of who one is” (p. 63).

As discussed in Chapter II, identity and the processes of identity formation refer to multiple intersecting characteristics and relations, such as race, ethnicity, age and gender, which are creatively deployed by individuals in a given situation. In other words, “[O]ur actions are based on the fact that we possess and have at our disposal a number of identities that can be used in different occasions and different contexts” (Lundberg, 2010, p. 33)<sup>45</sup>. In this respect, the migratory experience of young migrants is noteworthy when trying to understand the flexible, dynamic and multiple aspects of identity, as well as the use of music to express the multifaceted nature of their self. Thus, both in Chapter IV and V, while respectively dealing with the listening and performance patterns of young members, I aim to examine the role of music in identity formation processes.

In Chapter I, I have mentioned the unique nature of transit migration by noting three steps: past, present and future. Unlike other migration experiences, transit migrants do not experience today as permanent migrants normally do because the transit is merely a stop on a larger journey. In this respect, they have strong expectations from the future; a future in which both sides are unknown, as well as full of hope.

Music, by sweeping and stretching almost freely, can travel spatially and temporally.

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<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, it should be kept in mind that “migrant communities usually include a range of culture from the society of origin and there are likely to be divisions within the migrant community, such as ethnicity, social class and level of education” (Baily and Collyer, 2006, p. 173). Even though while mentioning Chaldean migrants from Iraq, we refer to a community they have highly strong and common ethnic and religious ties, considering the statement of Baily and Collyer, we need to be aware of that a community is not to be understood ignoring the variety within it. Moreover, if we adopt the sentence of Levi and Scheduling (2010) on the composers who displaced Europe by the Nazis to the communities: “Displacement did not simply silence these composers [people]. It rendered their stories and their creativities diverse and complex” (p. 4).

While dealing with the music and migration in the context of temporality, I highly regard Tia De Nora's (2004) quite concise statement,

At the most general and most basic level, music is a medium that can be and often is simply paired or associated with aspects of past experience [...] In this sense, the past musically conjured, is a resource for the reflexive movement from present to future, the moment-moment production of agency in real time. It serves also as a means of putting actors in touch with capacities, reminding them of their accomplished identities, which in turn fuels the ongoing projection of identity from past into future. (p. 66)

While considering this conceptualization and focusing on the musical practices of young members, this chapter deals with the conceptualization of the past, present, and future through music concurrently.

Additionally, the relationships among transnational Chaldean migrant networks in different countries and the position of music within them will be a focus point in this chapter. However, my data on this issue mostly relies on my fieldwork with the group in Istanbul, and some extra, but limited, interviews and online communication with members of communities in the US, Lebanon, and Canada. Recognizing the fact that a detailed studies which directly focuses on these transnational relations requires a wider field study; I keep the issue in the scope of my focus group.

#### **4.1 Musical Practices of Young Chaldean Migrants**

Even though during my long-term field study I did not come across anyone who plays a musical instrument at community gatherings,<sup>46</sup> I met two newcomer musicians, a professional singer, and a professional and formally educated keyboard player just after I completed my research. I played with the keyboardist for a special event in November 2014. Besides them, the only instrumentalists were the keyboard players of the church choir, who I have mentioned in the context of church music in Chapter III. Of course, it does not mean that there is no one who is able to play a musical instrument. On the contrary, I am told that some of the members were able to play the guitar in classical Western style, and one had played the piano in Iraq.

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<sup>46</sup> During my field research Jan (keyboard player) and his friend who plays oud were rehearsing but since it was not -at least yet- a public performance and they were not willing to allow me to listen their performances I could not observe their musical practices. As Jan told me they were playing Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic and Chaldean music.

Leaving the homeland under difficult circumstances makes it almost impossible for migrants to carry their musical instruments with them (Baily and Collyer, 2006, p. 172). In general, especially in the situation of “exile” or “enforced migration” it is almost impossible to bring musical instruments or even recordings with them.

During our interview in Houston, Emad’s<sup>47</sup> answer to my question shows the case clearly:

Me: Have you bring any musical product with you, such as CDs or cassettes?

Emad: (Laughing) Have we were in a situation to think about music? (December 12, 2012, Houston).

The same situation may be observed in the case of Chaldean migrants in Istanbul: Jan made his living as a keyboard player in Zakho before moving to Istanbul, where he began playing at the church where I conducted field research. As he could not bring his electronic keyboard with him, he had to buy a new one, a Korg PA60, to use for the church performances. Similarly, when he left Istanbul for Australia in 2013, he could not bring this keyboard either; it remained behind at the church and is now played by a newly arrived young amateur musician.

#### **4.1.1 Live music**

The religious music performances at the church I mentioned in Chapter III constitute a major part of live musical practices of the community. Apart from that, the only live performances are some very talented, but amateur, young members’ solo vocal performances at community gatherings. *Mawwal* (unmetered traditional/folk based melodies) is the preferred genre for proof of their beautiful voice and singing ability due the stringent character of the music. These small spectacles can take place at any community event. Additionally, I have witnessed a few song contests as entertainment in those events. Apart from *mawwal* performances, folk and urban folk songs are preferred for these song contests. Even though I have heard some other popular genres, both in Arabic and Turkish, in these vocal performances, I need to note that those cases were quite limited compared to “traditional” songs. Since this chapter only focuses on the listening practices, I will deal with the content and the stylistic aspects of these vocal performances in the next chapter.

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<sup>47</sup> A Chaldean man in his 40s, who migrated to Houston with his family after stay in Istanbul for 8 months.

Despite the fact that Chaldean communities have a vivacious live music scene, both in the homeland and the other settled countries, the case of Istanbul as a transit stop without enough of professional musicians or musical instruments increases the need for the use of recorded music in community events. In this respect, Chaldean DJs, who are familiar to the listening preferences of the community, have a significant role. During the course of my field research, I met two young DJs, Rafi and Danyal, who subsequently migrated to the US.

Danyal was performing in parties, weddings, and engagement ceremonies during his stay in Istanbul. Today he lives in Detroit, a major settlement destination for Chaldean migrants to the US. With the help of relatives and friends, he is seeking to establish himself as a professional DJ in his new country. Like many other musicians, Danyal could not bring his equipment with him either from Iraq to Turkey or from Turkey to the US. He told me that after his arrival to Istanbul, his father sent his staff to Istanbul. Similarly, when he left for the US, he gave his mixer to his cousin who stayed in Istanbul.



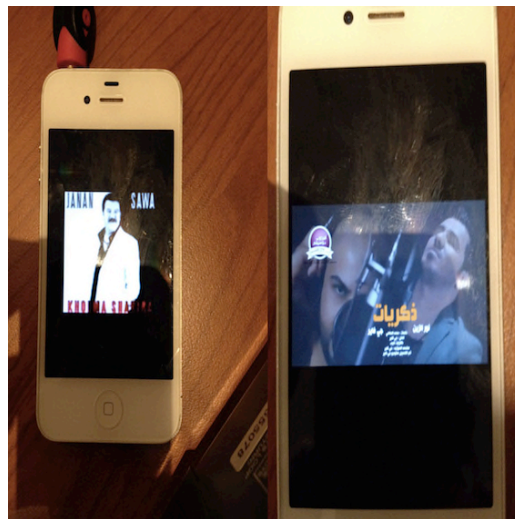
**Figure 4.1. :** DJ Danyal. The first photo has taken at an event in Iraq. The second one is from a party at Oratorio in Istanbul while he was using his own mixer and microphones (taken from his personal Facebook page by his permission).

After these Chaldean DJs left Istanbul, the community had to hire some Turkish DJs for similar events. However, according to my informants, Turkish DJs are not familiar with their musical tastes. Thus, their performances are far from being satisfactory for the community:

Actually the songs he [a Turkish DJ] played were good but we have some other songs. Previously, Rafi was playing at the parties here. He was a professional DJ who had played at wedding parties in Iraq. He was playing free of charge at the parties in Istanbul but once he was paid for a wedding. The parties were better when he was here. He left some songs to father Jacky [for Oratorio], but just a few (Manuela, January 4, 2013).

#### **4.1.2 Use of technology and listening practices**

Because of the lack of the opportunities to perform live music for the community in Istanbul, the using technological equipment for collective listening has become crucial. During the gatherings at Oratorio, they bring their playlists on their personal memory sticks to a computer in the hall. At the hall, there is also a small mixer, two loud speakers, and a couple of microphones. In some cases, they directly connect their mobile phones to the speakers to play music from their phone archive or from YouTube.



**Figure 4.2 :** Use of smart phones for listening at Oratorio (taken by Evrim Hikmet Ögüt).



Similarly, the online listening from the Internet via computers, tablets, and smartphones constitutes the main listening practice for individual use. Hence, depending on the music archive or the availability of Internet access, the smart phones have a key importance in both individual and collective listening practices. For instance, I have witnessed an occasion that a small group used their phones to provide music to dance at a corner of living room in Flona's birthday party at Jan Dark's house on January 9, 2014.

Use of mobile phones to listen to music is not unique to the members in Istanbul, but also common for the young Chaldeans in Houston. My young informants in Houston, Rafed and Adnan used their smart phones to show me songs they enjoy. For instance, during our chat on Turkish music, Rafed found a Turkish son from a Turkish TV series on YouTube mobile and played it for me.

Because technology has become more affordable in recent years, electronic communication among these communities is no longer limited to an economic elite. It must also be noted that even though the migratory process has the potential to instantly change a person's economic status, consumption patterns of migrants do not change at an equal rate. Thus, smart phones and the Internet are almost indispensable tools, especially for the younger generation.

Technology also operates as a means to connect migrant communities around the world. The musical interconnectedness of the migrant Chaldean community in Istanbul and the other Chaldean communities around the world, as well as the transnational spaces that are created by the Internet will be discussed below.

#### **4.1.3 Listening and sharing recorded music**

The lack of professional musicians among the members of the community, at least in the period I had conducted my field research, has directed me to focus on the listening habits of migrants.

Carolyn Landau (2011), in her chapter on music as a builder of identity in several phases of an individual named Mohamed. His migratory journey notes the significant effect of digital media technologies and music and video sharing websites (such as YouTube and DailyMotion). As she cites, Mohamed defines the function of YouTube in his life:

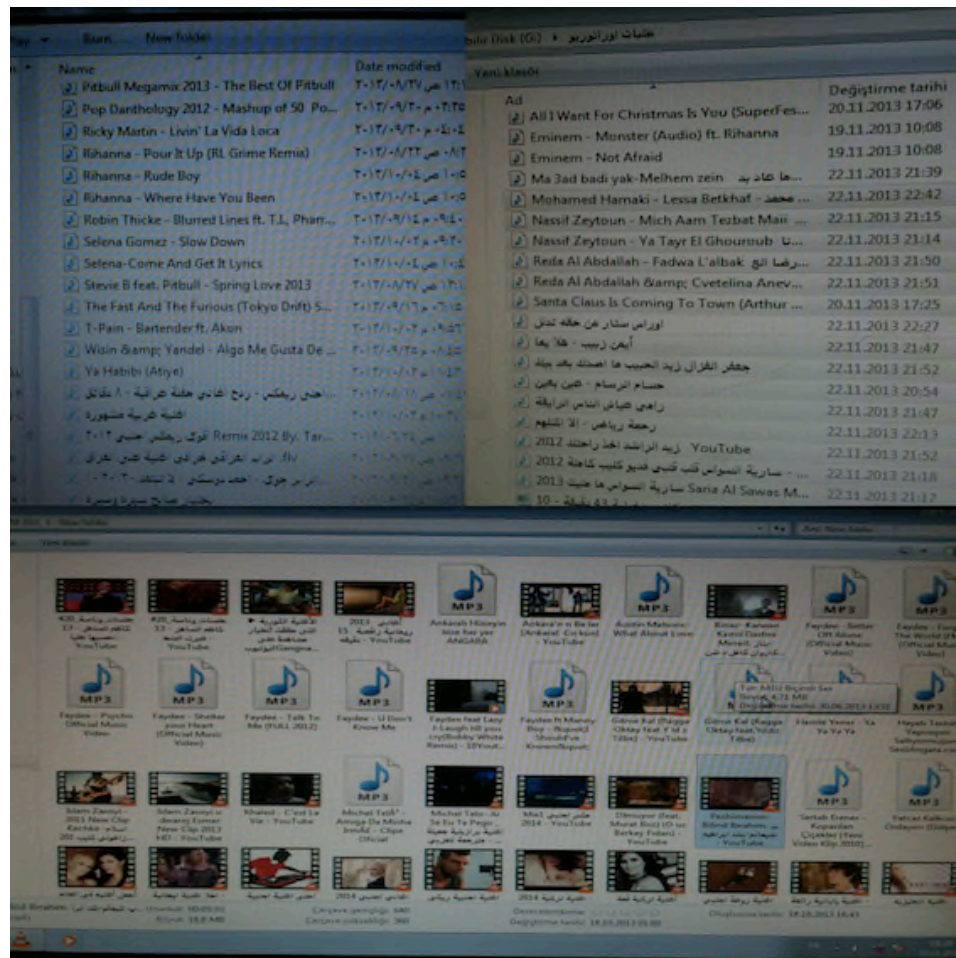
YouTube has become my window on Morocco and listening to music is an important way of appreciating my ‘Moroccan-eity’... In the past there was this strong homesickness, which I find now doesn’t exist, because I have my own little Morocco at home. (p.38)

Likewise, Facebook, as a social-networking service, and YouTube, as a video-sharing platform, are frequently used spaces to listen and share music for young Chaldeans.

We can assume that these transnational spaces are also the tools of “performing” or expressing the personal identities of these members. In terms of the “personal” expression, it is obvious that any single individual has her own musical preferences. At the same time, there is a common repertoire that refers to the musical taste of all young members. This repertoire has a wide range of music, including Iraqi or other Middle Eastern popular genres, especially Lebanese, as well as popular music<sup>48</sup> from Western countries, most commonly the US, or the countries in which they hold temporary or permanent residence. The playlists of various weekly gatherings at Oratorio clearly show that diversity.

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<sup>48</sup> In this study, the term “popular music” is used to refer the music that connected with the technologies of mass distribution. Thus, the term can cover numerous of genres such as jazz, rap, R&B et cetera. On the other hand, in popular music literature, “pop” or “western pop” terms might use in order to express a specific genre.



**Figure 4.3 :** Playlists of two different gatherings at Oratorio (taken by Evrim Hikmet Ögüt).

As mentioned in Chapter II, identity is formed and operates on a basis of reciprocity with the “other.” Hence, these young individuals may be Middle Eastern, Arab, Christian, Iraqi, Chaldean-Iraqi, Chaldean-Assyrian, or Chaldean at the same time depending on their conflicts and negotiations with the other. Besides that, they are inevitably young members of our highly globalized world as well; the music that they prefer to listen to expresses the multifaceted nature of their identity. Keeping in mind the plurality of their cultural identity, as discussed in Chapter II, being Chaldean, which refers to both a religious and ethnic identity, undoubtedly has the strongest emphasis for the Chaldean migrants in Istanbul. Thus, I consider Chaldean music to be representative of the community.

Among the musical genres and styles that Chaldean youth prefer, music from Turkey has also a significant position. In this respect, I mention Chaldean music and different styles of Turkish music in this chapter, considering the fact that if listening

to Chaldean music can be seen as a means of expression of cultural identity, then listening music from Turkey is worth mentioning in terms of the effects of transit migration on the formation of permanent listening practices.

#### **4.1.4 Listening to Chaldean music**

Due to the lack of adequate analyses of Chaldean music in the academic literature, this music is typically considered to belong to the same tradition as Syriac and Assyrian music.<sup>49</sup> When it comes to Chaldean popular music, it is often difficult to distinguish it from other examples of Middle Eastern popular music. Similarly, Lundberg (2003) states that in popular music, Assyrian musicians and composers prefer styles and orchestrations reminiscent of Middle Eastern popular music (p. 296).

There is no doubt that the most significant difference between the Chaldean popular music and the popular music of the other cultures in the region is language. It should be noted that, the Chaldean and Assyrian communities are neighbor cultures that have a common ethnic root, but accept different religious belief systems. In this respect, in a cultural context, the Chaldean and Assyrian identities can be, and frequently are, considered to be one massive identity. This becomes more evident when one notes that Chaldean audiences appreciate the Assyrian performers and consider the music they sing as their own music, and vice versa. In regards to this, mentioning “the language” refers to both Chaldean and Assyrian languages as being two dialects of the same Aramaic language, as opposed to the Arabic language.

In this study, I do not aim to make a conventional music analysis, but rather to develop an understanding of young community members’ perception of musical aesthetics. With this in mind, I have found that a common perception of Chaldean people of Chaldean music might be summarized with a comparison to Arab music, in which the latter is described by Jan as “more embellished and cheerful” than Chaldean music (May 21, 2012). The point Jan made expresses a common view of my informants on the difference between Arab music and Chaldean music. One can

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<sup>49</sup> While asking the question “What differentiates Assyrian music from other styles of music from the same area?” Dan Lundberg (2003) mentions an Assyrian musician, Gabriel Assad, who composed Assyrian music in 1930s and 40s. He used “Western harmonics” in the arrangements in order to differentiate Assyrian music from Arabic and Turkish music and constructed his “national Assyrian” music as a blend of East and West (p. 296).

assume that the “Arab music” in this definition refers to a style of rhythmic patterns and instruments, such as riq and goblet drum, that give a distinguishable form to the music. Similarly, while defining the Chaldean music, Ricky emphasis the difference between Arab and Chaldean rhythms (August 9, 2014).

Young male vocal performers are widely appreciated by the Chaldean youth. The music of most popular Assyrian-Chaldean singers can gain between a few thousands to 95 thousand views on YouTube, as Warda Silwa and Stewart did. They live in the homeland, and there music is almost totally uses a musical base that is created by electronic keyboards or the midi sounds of variable musical instruments in a wide range from guitar and piano to more local instruments such as *kawala*. There rarely is an addition of acoustic instruments, such as the violin with Arab music sonority and ornamentations. On the contrary, the musical productions musicians who live in the US, such as Walter Aziz (San Francisco, 21 album) covers more sophisticated arrangements that mostly use acoustic instruments. However, in terms of a sense of aesthetic, the young Chaldeans in Istanbul do not evaluate these musical products differently. Ricky is a member who has a special interest in music as a good listener and amateur guitar player. Ricky distinguishes the pieces in these two groups according to their “musical quality.” However, according to him, people from Iraq are not able to appreciate music in general (August 9, 2014).

#### **4.1.5 Listening to music from Turkey**

Among from the musical genres in the Turkish language, Turkish popular music is among the most preferred for young Chaldean migrants in Istanbul. While listening and dancing to Turkish popular music in weekly gatherings and other youth parties, their preferences are not different from their Turkish coevals.

It is an undisputed fact that music from Turkey, especially some genres such as pop and *arabesk*, are listened to by a large audience in the Middle East. Jan told me that he was listening to Turkish performers frequently in Iraq and İbrahim Tatlıses was his favorite (May 21, 2012). Similarly, Sibel Can, Mahsun Kırmızıgül, and Tarkan are among the best-known performers from Turkey that are widely listened to in Middle Eastern countries. Besides, there is no doubt that because of the popularity of Turkish TV series in the region, people are exposed to music from Turkey a part of daily life. Some series with popular soundtracks include *Gümüş*, *İhlamurlar Altında*, *Kavak Yelleri*, *Kurtlar Vadisi* et cetera, and the singers and bands that sing them have

become the famous musicians in the Middle Eastern countries.

In other words, young Chaldeans are not unfamiliar with the music from Turkey even in the homeland. A newly composed religious hymn based on a Turkish song (see Chapter III) can be a very interesting listening example. However, Ricky, who has dozens of Turkish songs on his mobile phone now, states that their interest and access to music in Turkish was limited in Iraq. He says, “[W]hen I was in Dohuk, Iraq, I only knew İbrahim Tatlıses. But then I encounter many other singers here” (August 9, 2014). Certainly, the music of Turkey they encounter when they arrive in Istanbul diversifies their musical universe.

Iraqi-Chaldeans in Istanbul not only listen and dance to Turkish music, but also sing it at their youth gatherings. It should be noted that the members of the community who sing Turkish songs are usually the ones who speak Turkish more fluently. For example, in a small birthday party at the home of Jan Dark and her brothers, we played a game that requires each one to do something that the birthday girl, Flona, asks. According to Flona’s wish, Manuela sang a Turkish song, *Ben Seni Sevdiğümi*,<sup>50</sup> which is a song she learned from another Turkish TV series, *Gülpembe*.<sup>51</sup> She also sang the same song in a theater play they performed at Oratorio.

Even though singing a song in a foreign language usually requires knowledge of that language, in some cases they sing the Turkish lyrics without understanding the meaning. When Rafed showed me a song from a Turkish TV serial, *İhlamlar Altında*, the video clip had Arabic subtitles. Even though he did not understand Turkish, he started to sing the Turkish lyrics by heart (December 13, 2012, Houston).

Young Chaldeans share video clips of Turkish songs on social media frequently.<sup>52</sup> It

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<sup>50</sup> It is a famous urban folk song that originated in the Black Sea region.

<sup>51</sup> Arabic TV channels did not broadcast this series, but since her family was watching Turkish TV channels in Iraq, she is familiar with it. This is the same reason they speak quite fluent Turkish as well.

<sup>52</sup> Among numerous of popular songs, one of them, “Ankara’nın Bağları,” a cover version of a well-known urban folk songs from the central Anatolia, is probably the most significance one. The song is also very popular among the Turkish audience. Its success is based on the “semi-frivolous” connotations of the song. I have come cross this song dozens of times in youth gatherings of the Chaldean migrants while they were dancing by imitating the special dance figures of the region (Ankara, the central Anatolia) the song comes from.

is significant that they keep sharing these songs even after they migrate to a third country. For instance, Yousif regularly posts Turkish popular songs on his personal Facebook page even after his migration to Australia. Sometimes, the posts are accompanied by Turkish comments such as “çok güzel,” meaning “very nice.” Similarly, Rafed and Adnan, who migrated to Houston through Turkey, (see Chapter II) told me that they still listen to Turkish music frequently.

Hence, even if Turkish music has entered the conscience of the transnational Chaldean community through market relationships in the music and TV sectors in Turkey and the Middle Eastern countries, there is no doubt that transit migration has furthered this interest. Thus, I state that the presence of the Turkish popular music in the transnational Chaldean musical universe, with a diverse and rich repertoire, arises from the transit phase in Istanbul. In this respect, the appearance of Turkish music in the transnational Chaldean network’s listening habits can only be understood through the role of Turkey as a transit country for thousands of Chaldean migrant.

In order to clarify this statement, it is important to depict these networks and their musical interconnectedness, which has a long history that starts at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, since the focus of this study is limited to the musical practices in Istanbul, in this chapter my concentration will be on the position of the Chaldean migrant community in Istanbul. I will address the issue around this community while giving some extra information about the recent situation in general.

#### **4.2 Circulation of Music among the Transnational Chaldean Networks**

Migration is an experience that blurs sharp borders, both in time and space. Moreover, music has a unique character that can travel easily and invisibly. Toynbee and Dueck (2011) in *Migrating Music*, define mediation of music as,

[T]he circulation through print, broadcast, recording and various forms of electronic dissemination of musical objects that are separable in time and space from human subjects yet continually available for activation and engagement by them. (p. 2)

In our context, the travel of music in time refers to the unique temporality of transit migration among the past, present, and future.

On the other hand, the circulation of music in space helps to create a re-united Chaldean society “on the base of preserving musical practices from home and remarking them in a new context” (Toynbee and Dueck, 2011, p. 2).

It is thought that the Chaldean migration from the Middle East, especially from Northern Iraq, to Europe and North America started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due on the economic reasons (Albayrak, 1997, p. 150; Sengstock, 2005, p. 3). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, along with other non-Muslim peoples, the Chaldeans have been forced to emigrate from the Ottoman lands. While some settled in other Middle Eastern countries, Russia or India, the others migrated to Europe. Chaldeans outside Iraq live in Europe, mostly in Sweden, Germany and France, the US, Canada, and Australia. They have established economic and social networks spanning Europe, North America, and Australia.

The term “transnational” was propounded to provide a deeper understanding of the migrant communities that have multiple relationships in reciprocity among multiple nation-states in our highly globalized world.<sup>53</sup> In this respect, “Transmigrants are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation-state” (Glick Shiller *et al.* 1995 p. 48). The Iraqi-Chaldean community is in a fragmented state today, with completely different circumstances in the homeland, transit countries, or destination countries in which they live. In this fragmented situation, the interrelationships among the other units of the community have a great importance.

During its temporary stay in Istanbul, the community enjoys multiple connections with other Chaldean communities in Turkey, Iraq, Canada, Australia, Europe, the US, and other transit countries, such as Jordan or Syria.<sup>54</sup> These interrelations have proliferated over the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the spread of affordable communication technologies. Since this particular time period was characterized by constant violence and massive human mobility, a strong need emerged for the

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<sup>53</sup> For a detailed discussion on the concepts “diaspora” and “transnationalism” in this study, see chapter I.

<sup>54</sup> Flona, who migrated to Australia with her family during the course of my field study, states that her relatives are spread out between Sweden, France, Greece, the US, Australia, and Iraq, and she has constant relationships with the ones in each country.



sharing of accurate information about the violent persecution occurring in Iraq.

As Benedict Anderson noted as early as 1994, “The communications revolution of our time has profoundly affected the subjective experience of migration” (p. 322). In the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the main circulation device for music and other information from the home country has been the CD. Today, online file sharing has taken the place of CDs, with smart phones serving as the most useful device. Similarly, satellite receivers transmitting Middle Eastern television broadcasts can be found the houses of even the poorest migrants (Danış, 2006, p. 8).

According to my observations, almost all Chaldeans enjoy the relations with their relatives in the homeland and the other countries. The cultural importance given to maintaining family relations and keeping the family as the core of the community (Gallagher, 1999, p. 158) can be seen as an important reason for this. Likewise, transnational families that diffused over two or more countries constitute the basic elements of those transnational networks by functioning in sharing products, services, labor, commodity, and the other economic sources in migrant’s life.

Apart from online radio broadcasting, there are chat and dating services, and forums that provide information flow among the relatives there are also strong economic networks.<sup>55</sup> Besides information and economic products, cultural products are also in circulation in these networks. Music, with its capacity to pull ahead with the help of recording technologies, has a privileged position among these cultural productions. As Toynbee and Dueck (2011) state,

More recently, mediating technologies have permitted migrants to keep in touch in a nearly instantaneous manner with musical happenings vast distances away. E-mail, digitized music files and video hosting sites permit migrants to track the latest trends and dance moves from back home, and just as importantly to celebrate and create a shared musical history with distant intimates. Mediation has also allowed migrant communities to join, and play a part in constructing, musical networks, that is “spaces” (Appadurai 1996) or “publics” (see Warner 2002) that cross regional and national borders. (Toynbee and Dueck, 2011, p. 2)

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<sup>55</sup> Such as Chaldean American Chamber of Commerce (Url 15). On the website, there are links for many other commercial organizations that exemplify these economic relationships.

The musical circulation among the Chaldean communities mostly occurs in two forms: one is the circulation of recorded music and the second is the circulation of music by people's physical mobility. These two types of the circulation can be seen both with secular and religious music.

#### 4.2.1 Circulation of recorded music

Recording technology, since its invention in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, breaks the line of music with time and place by making it possible to listen to any musical piece anytime, anywhere. As Carolyn Landau (2011) states, “[T]he recent development of communication technologies brought a shift from “private collections” to a virtual and fluid “public library” of music that reachable through the Internet” (p. 45). Hence, which songs are “liked” and re-shared illuminates a common, shared preference of the Chaldean youth. Any single video on YouTube can exemplify transnational relations through the comments written below it in both Arabic and English<sup>56</sup> by Chaldean listeners from across the diaspora.



**Figure 4.4 :** A section from the comments on a hymn in Chaldean language on YouTube (Url-16).

<sup>56</sup> Writing in the Chaldean script is not usually possible with modern keyboards.

Besides these ready-made platforms, Chaldean-Assyrian people create their own video and music-sharing portals, which are accessible by all community members.<sup>57</sup> These web pages function as a means to promote Assyrian-Chaldean musicians and bands and their products. These are usually in sound mp3 and various video formats. Some of them have forum pages that transnational Chaldean network can access to comment.

The circulation of recorded music using new technologies also covers religious music. Religious hymn circulation can be considered in two groups. First, most examples of Chaldean hymns available on the Internet are in the form of professional studio recordings. Chaldean migrants share these hymns on their personal Facebook pages, not only on holy days, such as Easter or Christmas, but also often on ordinary days.

Second, newly composed hymns circulate largely through amateur-produced recordings. Migrants in Istanbul are informed about these new musical products via their friends in Iraq. Once during a rehearsal at the church, I was made to listen to a new hymn composed and recorded by a young, amateur female singer, Salwa, through a smart phone (see Chapter III; on DVD, Track 4). These newly composed hymns suggest the continuity and dynamism of the Chaldean tradition in the homeland. The importance given to this sacred repertoire has gained significance in light of the stress placed upon Chaldean culture by the loss of much of its population in Iraq due to emigration. Living under oppression, and even attack in many regions of Iraq, Chaldean-Iraqis experience the strong threat of cultural extinction in their homeland.

#### **4.2.2 Mediation of people**

The second type of the musical circulation requires the mediation of people. In this respect, likewise the “constant stream of new arrivals providing up-to-date information from the country of origin” (Sengstock, 2005, p. 51), music is circulated by the physical movement of people. Even though migration is a difficult experience, largely due to the loss of economic and social capital of migrants, they are still able to protect their cultural capital. This cultural capital consists of any kind of education

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<sup>57</sup> A Canada based Assyrian-Chaldean music portal see Url-17; a portal in Arabic language see Url-18.

or talent, including musical abilities. As can be seen in the example of the Iraqi nay performer who migrated Syria and earned his living by performing at night clubs (Wilkes, 2010, pp. 18-19), Chaldean migrants in Istanbul who are professional musicians, such as Sadeer and Stewart, can integrate within both migrant networks and various layers of local cultural, social, and economic life (see Chapter III). Besides that, since Chaldean religious musical culture is orally transmitted, knowledge of this musical repertoire carries great importance within the tradition. In this sense, former members of church choirs from different regions of Iraq are the main mediators of the oral culture and can easily enter the migrant networks during the course of their migration (see Chapter III).

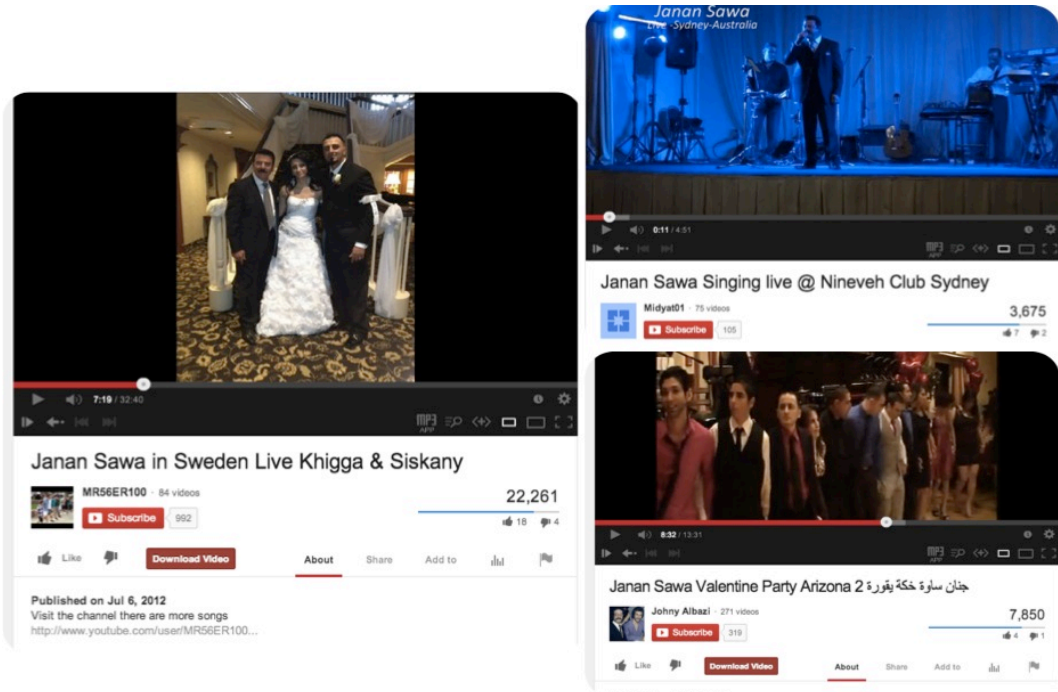
The Chaldean communities in Europe, Australia, and the US with settled Chaldean performers, have the opportunity to organize live music performances in their community gatherings. These professional musicians are also significant mediators of Chaldean music in the diaspora. They perform primarily in community gatherings and wedding ceremonies around the world. According to Rami, “Some of these US-based Chaldean singers and bands perform at almost ten wedding ceremonies per month during the summer by travelling from one Chaldean settlement to another in the US and Canada” (Personal interview with Rami, November 22, 2013, Istanbul).

Jane Sugarman (2004), in her article on the circulation of Albanian music, states that, “with the exception of the war periods, many homeland performers have spent much of the year touring among diaspora communities” (p. 24). Jane Sugarman also emphasizes that these concert tours and the album selling in diaspora provide the economic source needed to maintain their professional career as Albanian musicians. In other words, there is a network between diaspora and homeland that function during the different phases of production, performance, consumption, et cetera (ibid pp. 24-25). Even though there is no accessible data on the Chaldean music industry, one can assume that similar market relations can be found there as well. As Melih Duygulu (2005) states while discussing Syriac music, in 1960-70s, the LP’s of Syriac music were published in various countries in which communities live such, as Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Germany and Sweden (p. 320).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Even though the mentioned community is not Chaldean, their shared history makes some of the statements for Assyrian, Chaldean, and Syriac peoples mostly apply for all of them.

Only through a short search on YouTube, can one find numerous performances of Janan Sawa, who left Iraq in 1980s and first moved to Greece for two years and then subsequently settled in the US, in France, Sweden, and Australia (Figure 4.5). Thus, it is clear that Rami's estimation is not exaggerated.



**Figure 4.5 :** Three examples of live performances of Janan Sawa in Sweden, Australia, and the US respectively (Url-19, 20, 21). The name of the Club in Sydney (Nineveh) refers to the historical Assyrian-Chaldean region in the homeland; it is obviously one of the numerous Assyrian-Chaldean establishments in Sydney.

The popularity of some musicians who live in diaspora, such as Sawa, in the homeland shows the reciprocity of this relationship. According to Thomas Turino (2004), this reciprocity is determinative for the diaspora, among other migratory experiences. Thus, if we remember the fact that, in diaspora communities the hierarchy between the homeland and diaspora lands is questionable, the effect of the diaspora's contribution to the musical universe can be better understood. Similarly, Deniz Yılmaz (2009), in her book on Syriac culture, states that the growth of Syriac music in 1960's in the diaspora affects the musical production in homeland (p. 171).

However, if we go back to the Chaldean community in Istanbul, even though the community creates and maintains multi-dimensional relationships with both the

homeland and settled communities, it still does not have the same economic opportunities and institutions as the other Chaldean communities. For example, the community in Istanbul does not enjoy the performances of the well-known performers. First, this is too small a community to organize such a flamboyant event. Secondly, in this transit phase of their migration, people generally do not have a stable income or even enough savings with them to spend it given their unclear future. Daily life goes on in the transit land, and they do not avoid having wedding and engagement ceremonies. However, the celebrations happen in small wedding halls in their neighborhood with the participation of a couple of hundred guests and music is played on ready recordings by a professional or amateur DJ.

### **4.3 Age as a Determined Axis in Listening Practices**

The listening practices of young members were chosen as the focus of this chapter for a practical reason: Availableness of young members in their weekly gatherings and special events.

On the other hand, I have a basic assumption on my mind that age is a determinative factor in listening preferences. During my field study, besides observing the listening habits of young generation, I observed some community events that included the members from all age groups, such as wedding parties. I also interviewed a few members from the older generation. According to these limited data, I can state that the interest in Western and Turkish popular music is not present at the same level in all age groups. Ferdo,<sup>59</sup> Jan's mother says, "My musical tastes are totally different with Jan. I like old music" (May 21, 2012).

In the article on the listening patterns of Soviet Koreans in former USSR, Hae-Kyung Um (2000), using a comprehensive questionnaire study,<sup>60</sup> presents a similar picture. She states that while the age groups over 50 are listening to Korean traditional and Korean old popular music, the groups in their teens, 20s, and 30s

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<sup>59</sup> In her 60s.

<sup>60</sup> Um's study examines the listening patterns of Soviet Koreans based on various parameters such as age, gender, educational level, migration generation, and place of residence. Among them, gender attracts my attention. According to Um, gender difference (she operates on the basis of male-female dichotomy) does not create a distinctive difference (p. 131); fittingly to my findings.

prefer Western popular, Russian popular, Korean popular and Western classical music (p. 129).

Not only listening to more “traditional” or old music, this generation in their 50s-60s also prefers singing a different repertoire in their daily life. The repertoire I mention mostly includes the songs on displacement and loss and are performed by women who directly encountered these events. As opposed to their children, they have a stronger tie with the homeland. However, likely due to a feeling of danger for the future of their children in the homeland, they are quite willing to migrate as well. Yet, I assume that their feelings about the past and future are not exactly the same as those of their daughters and sons. Unfortunately, my request to record these amateur performances of older members failed because of their timidity as well as because older women consider singing in public or in front of a stranger to be improper. However, the intimate situations I have witnessed and informal chats show that these women sing constantly at home while handling housework. For instance Rami, son of Nazdar<sup>61</sup> says, “Oh! You should listen to my mom when she is at home, she always sings sad songs, especially after my father’s loss.” Or Yousif tells that, his family frequently asks him to sing *hazin* (sad) songs; when he sings, they weep.

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<sup>61</sup> In her 50s.





## 5. SINGING FOR IRAQ, SINGING AS A MIGRANT

In the previous chapter, I have touched on the singing performances of young members at the gatherings at Oratorio. Actually, when I started to conduct my fieldwork, I initially thought the musical practices in Chaldean community do not have a strong role in daily life, especially when compared to other transit communities in Istanbul, such as migrants from African countries. But during the course of my research, young members of the Chaldean-Iraqi have changed my mind with their rich and lively musical life.

Their musical performances mostly include singing *mawwals* and traditional songs in the Arabic language. The domination of Arabic music and language can be seen a result of the domination of this music in their musical universe. It can be claimed that Chaldean youth prefers pop songs in Chaldean, English, Kurdish, and Turkish languages respectively when listening and dancing to music. But interestingly, the singing repertoire mostly consists of traditional Iraqi music and popular music in any other language rarely enters to this repertoire. In this respect, it can be assumed that while the listening practices of the young members is different from the older generations, the singing practices of the community members in all age groups presents similarity.

Why do these young people listen to a current repertoire but prefer singing an “older” one? On one hand, the daily life continues in the transit land, and the listening practices sustain a current flow (see Chapter IV). In that sense, “today’s music,” to which they listen, refers to the “today” of their journey.<sup>62</sup> But in the case of performances,<sup>63</sup> they behave with some inclinations that probably reflect their more intense and deep feelings about their past, meaning their ties with the

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<sup>62</sup> The methaphor that explaine their migration process as being past/present/future (yesterday/today/tomorrow/) in three steps of their migration, homeland/transit land/destination land is proposed in Chapter I.

<sup>63</sup> In this context the word “performance” not only refer to a musical or artistic action but also acting in any way.

homeland. In other words, in the cases of listening and performing, different features of their identity became more prominent: Firstly as young people who are ready to experience a new life, and secondly as refugees who are displaced from their home.

### **5.1 A Special Event at Oratorio**

The case study of a special event at Oratorio and a song contest that took place that night exemplifies the youth gatherings and the live vocal performances of the members.

Apart from the weekly gatherings, some special events take place at Oratorio, which include parties for holidays, such as Christmas and the Easter. These parties start around 4-5 p.m., the usual time of weekly gatherings, and continue almost until midnight. For each event, there is a small organization committee that usually consists of people who speak fluent Turkish or English, which are the languages Father Jacky can speak as the responsible officer of Oratorio. These young members are also chosen among the most social and popular young members. I believe that one of the reasons of their advantages in social relationships is because by being able to speak these languages, they have the privilege of being able to enter the daily life of the city. This ability makes them a source of information for the other community members. This small group plans the night according to a timetable and ensures that it is followed. It is also common to hire a professional photographer, and in some cases a videographer, to document the night.

These special events include various games, dance, music contests, and a communal dinner. The time of dinner can be seen as a break between two entertainment sections. Everyone brings some food, commonly *biryani*, a traditional Iraqi food, and sets the table together. Following the prayer with Father Jacky, they share the food. After the dinner, the games continue. And the night finishes with the last prayer. The last prayer is not unique to the special events, but also an ordinary part of weekly gatherings. At the end of the event, in order to proceed with the prayer, they set the tables in a circle. On occasion father Jacky plays a hymn from the computer in order to decrease the tension of the night for the last prayer. It is an English hymn, “Holy Spirit Rain Down” (Url-22).

Among those special events I was able to attend was a very interesting and unique

celebration on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014. It was a carnival that celebrated according to carnival and fasting traditions before Easter in Christian liturgy.

Since carnival celebrations are not common among the Chaldeans, and the content of a carnival, especially the special costumes seems strange to them, at the beginning of the event Father Jacky gave a short speech about the aim of Oratorio to prepare the young Chaldeans for their new life in Western countries; but they would never make do anything against their religious traditions or beliefs. In order to be ready, he said, the young members needed to learn some of the religious practices that are implemented in those countries. I believe that Father Jacky felt a necessity to emphasize that the event has a religious content which is not against their beliefs because of many of the attendants had a reservation about the event, as just a few people wore the special costumes.

The program of the night included various costumes, songs, dance contests, and a dinner, as is usual. Apart from that, there was an interesting make-up contest in which four female members put make-up on four males, and then the jury chose the most “beautiful” one. This game is significant as a modern and restrained version of the traditional games that have people used to challenge the gender roles in Christian festivities for hundreds of years (Ehrenreich, 2007) and as far as I can observe the young Chaldeans are not unfamiliar to it.



**Figure 5.1 :** The program of the carnival in Turkish.

### 5.1.1 The song contest

Before the contest, some of the members from the organization committee asked me if I would like to be a jury member for the contests, and I accepted. The other jury members were Rani and Masis.

These contests are among the most exciting parts of the parties, and of course the members have their own favorite singers. The name of the song contest of carnival was “Voice”, referring to the popular song contests on TV that have been adopted in numerous countries. The first idea of the members in organization committee was creating a show similar to the original “Voice”, but as we did not have swivel chairs and there was a language barrier between the other jury members and me,<sup>64</sup> we decided to make it in a more general form.

It was interesting to observe that not only the most talented members, but also some moderately talented ones competed. All the songs except the one Masis sang were old Arabic love songs, or *mawwals*. Masis is not a Chaldean, but an Armenian who came from northern Iraq. Armenian migrants from Iraq live together with bigger Christian communities in Istanbul just as the Armenian minority in Iraq does. They do not speak Kurdish instead of Arabic or Chaldean, so they mostly communicate with the Chaldeans in Kurdish. For this reason, he sang a Kurdish free meter folk song in the contest (on DVD, Track 13). Since his performance was one of the most appreciated acts in the contest, we can assume that the members of the Chaldean community do not show any discriminatory behavior against both the Armenian and Kurdish ethnicity or language in the case.

### 5.1.2 Rapping at the carnival

After the contest, some male members had a rap performance. The song they sang a love song, مكن (Possible) of Iraqi singer J-Fire with Humam and Ahmed Waleed. Example Track 14 (see DVD) shows the performance at the carnival. As we can see in the video, four male members sing the song. While two of them share the rap section, one of them performs the rhythmic base by beat boxing, and a third one sings the melodic interludes. This third member is also one of the most appreciated

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<sup>64</sup> Masis is an Armenian, so the common language for Masis and Rani is Kurdish, while it is English for me and Rani; but we were not able to talk each other directly with Masis.

singers of the community and won the song contest of the night. During the performance, the audience, mainly some other male members, contributed to the performance by clapping their hands. However, most of them were not able to keep a steady beat. They also cheered and applauded at the parts they liked. This clearly is a collective practice, especially for young males who see rap music as a tool for expression.

### **5.1.3 Dance contest**

Another interesting part of the Carnival was a dance contest in which all the nominees were dancing to various Western pop songs at the same time. The winners of the contest were Jan Dark and Steven. Steven as one of the few members who can speak English fluently, mostly listens to Western pop music. His dance style included hip-hop dance moves. While they both wore traditional Middle Eastern outfits in the carnival, it is worth giving special attention to Steven's outfit, which was clearly traditionally Arab. Because of the assimilation and Arabization processes that Chaldean people in Iraq were exposed to, the "Arab" identity is probably the identity they accept the least. Thus, it can be thought that wearing an Arab costume in carnival did not mean wearing a traditional costume that represents one's identity, but rather a way of being someone else, as the carnival required.

## **5.2 Reflecting the Identity through Singing**

In order to discuss their performances as acts that reflecting their identity, we need to keep in mind the discussion in chapter II on the multiple aspects of identity. As I stated that they are Chaldean, Christian, Iraqi, and young members of our globalized world at the same time and they are able to choose and put into action any of these identities depending on their surroundings. In this respect, emphasizing an "Iraqi" identity in this phase of their migration as citizens of a country that is being oppression can be understood in this context.

These young people, especially the male members, present a strong patriotism during various occasions, such as the theater play I mentioned in chapter II. If we refer to the statements about diasporic nationalism in Chapter II, I should note that the aspect of nationalism I observed was not just the result of a feeling of otherness, but also there was a strong reaction to the recent situation in Iraq after the invasion in 2003.

Apart from that, the psychological effects of displacement and the feeling of longing are worth considering while discussing on their self-representation through music.

A field research case during the rehearsals for the Easter Holiday service could be an example of the strong nationalistic feeling that based on these reasons. During the rehearsals of three days special services of Easter Holiday, choir members chose a special repertoire, which was one of the most proper ones in terms of the subject of the hymns and the mournful feelings they evoke. The most important hymn for them was a hymn about Iraq. This is a hymn in the Arabic language, and its original name is *Yeranum alatfal* (الاطفال رنمي) meaning, Sing Children. The lyrics I have mentioned in Chapter III are emphasis the mournful feelings: “Sing children sing with your friends/ praise the god with happiness and glory/ suffering and tears spent our patience/ they killed our love with wars/ our prayers are for Iraq, dear god.”

If we examine the lyrics, it is obvious that this is not an ancient hymn, but has been added to the religious repertoire in recent years. Actually, as I mentioned in Chapter III, the Chaldean church repertoire consists of both ancient and relatively new hymns. Also, the repertoire does not exclude new musical elements, such as some musical elaborations with electronic keyboards. But if we assume a complex process to gain acceptance into a sacred repertoire, this hymn should be one of the newest. On the other hand, it combines secular and sacred contents together. And it clearly has a strong emphasis on nationalistic feelings and nostalgia for the "golden past" of the homeland.

Another example is a video shot in Istanbul close to Taksim, the center of the city, in October 2013 is recorded by a friend of Yousif Ibrahim (see DVD, Track 15). In the video, we see Yousif Ibrahim and some male Chaldean Iraqi friends of his in a tour around the center of the city at night.<sup>65</sup> In the video, they come across a local violin player who plays on the street near Odakule. Yousif Ibrahim, a person who is usually willing to sing, starts to sing a well-known Iraqi song.<sup>66</sup> When I asked him why he chose that song, he said that, “[I]t is about oppression and sadness and homelessness” (in Eng. July 28, 2014, Sydney). We then see that the violin player is

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<sup>65</sup> Since I have mentioned in Chapter II, there is certain segregation between males and females and who enjoy the city during the evening and night are male members. They often visit the clubs and bars around Taksim.

<sup>66</sup> For an original version of the song see Url-23.

not familiar with the song and he only plays a drone to accompany and support his free singing. This joint performance constitutes one of the very rare occasions that Chaldean migrants create a musical relationship with local people. The widespread use of cell phones among the young members of the community to record any social occasion, including music is also noteworthy in the video.

As it is exemplified in the video, Yousif Ibrahim's friends and the other members of the community usually appreciate his performances. As a young person who is aware of his ability, he hopes to build a career in music as a vocal performer. So, he continues his performances in his new location, Sydney, Australia. Another video is from a birthday party of a friend of him in Australia. But fortunately, the musical facilities are far more developed, and he has the opportunity to sing with the proper accompaniment of a Chaldean oud player (see DVD, Track 16). The chosen song is again on the current situation of his homeland. As he says, "[The song] speak[s] for the nation and the bounties of Iraq, but people are *mtadmr* (miserable)" (in Eng. July 28, 2014, Sydney).

In another video recorded in Istanbul, Janan sings a song on the seaside (see DVD, Track 17). The video is posted by a friend of Janan to his personal Facebook page and the note under the video says that it is a "Pro-Iraq song by Janan's voice".<sup>67</sup> The first part of the performance is a sad *mawwal* and the second part is a song of Hatem Al Iraqi (Url-24). This is a widely used structure, not only in traditional Iraqi music, but also in the other Middle Eastern countries. The song he sang, *يا مهاجر* (Oh Immigrant), is about a love affair that was broken because of the migration. Singing about the separation that migration brings is not a surprising theme. I met a young man who decided to go Iraq back not just for his family, but more importantly because his girlfriend could not manage to come to Istanbul after him.

As my informants have told me, migration is a common reason for young Chaldeans, both in Iraq and Turkey, to be separated from their partners. Since the destination point for many of them is uncertain, if it is not possible to marry in rather quickly, they do not want to have relationships in the transit country. Farah mentions two different Chaldean migrant couples who met in Istanbul and got married before they left the country in order to be sent the same destination.

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<sup>67</sup> موال عراقي ياناس بصوت

The lyrics to *Oh Immigrant* are below in English, and were taken from an online forum (Url-25).

**Oh Immigrant**

Where do I see you oh immigrant tell me in which country you are now  
Tell me in which country you are now  
Where do I see you oh immigrant  
Your separation is not easy for me and it's not a crisis that will pass by  
Come on and satisfy me  
Where do I see you oh immigrant  
Your separation is the illness of the illness it didn't leave a brain in my head  
Since the moment you're gone I swear my heart collapsed and I became a poet and  
you don't feel this  
Like a bird in a cage, alone the trees are finished from him  
Despite his will he was satisfied with his promise  
And what his life has brought to him  
This house and it's corner, you have a picture on its wall  
And I'm not with anyone but you  
I swear of you, I have never loved anybody but you  
Oh my yesterday, my present  
Where do I see you oh immigrant  
When do our nights and stuff and songs get back  
Where is your promise of faithful?  
Dear why do you forget me?  
Baby come to my home and set off my fire with your coming back  
Oh my most precious for me  
Oh my love, my destiny, my promise  
I want to forget you but I can't  
Where do I see you oh immigrant

In the days I completed my fieldwork, the Chaldean communities in Iraq faced a disastrous calamity that resulted in the death and exile of tens of thousands of people. Mosul was hit especially hard. Since the IS took Mosul, Christian community has been forced to convert Islam, flee the city, or face death.

In those days, Christianity became the prominent element of their identity, not only for Chaldeans in Iraq, but also for Chaldeans around the world. A lot of Chaldean people, as well as non-Chaldeans as a demonstration of solidarity shared the news



about the bitter persecutions in Iraq and shared the letter ܢ (n) as the symbol of Christianity<sup>68</sup> on their Facebook pages, mostly as a profile pictures. These developments affected their self-representation in two ways. Firstly, regardless of being Chaldean, Assyrian, or Syriac, they needed to assert their Christianity. And secondly, they needed to remind themselves and the world that they have been inhabitants of Iraq for thousands of years, and Iraq is their country. Thus, two aspects of their identities, “Christian” and “Iraqi,” came to the forefront.

As a result of this increased oppression, the sharing of religious content, including religious music, has increased on social media. Similarly, Badema Softić (2011), in her study of musical practices in post-war Srebrenica, demonstrates how sacred musical forms, such as the *ilahijas*, became popular in daily life in response to the effects of post-war trauma (p. 169).

Two hymn videos that Saleem recorded demonstrate a similar tendency among the Chaldean migrants. After the entrance of ISIS to Mosul on July 17, 2014, Saleem, a member of the Chaldean migrant church choir in Istanbul, recorded two solo hymn performances and shared them on YouTube by under name on July 22 and 23, 2014 (Url-26 and Url-27). The names of the hymns are Taalu eleya (تعالوالية in Arabic) and one, Ya mshiha Marya (يا مشيحاه مري) in Chaldean. In both videos, he used various religious pictures, including the pictures of Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary.

### 5.3 Rapping for Iraq, Rapping for Displacement

Rap music has become the foremost means of expression for migrant subcultures globally, and the Chaldean community uses it in the same manner. Amateur rap music performance videos of Chaldean and Assyrian youth on YouTube show the young migrants in other countries performing their *free-style* performances in their community gatherings as well as making special videos for YouTube. Besides the rap performance on the night of the carnival, which I mentioned above, a unique song written and composed by Ricky is a very significant example of the use of rap music as a means to express the migratory experience.

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<sup>68</sup> The Arabic letter ن is the first letter in the word الناصري (*Nazarene*, a native or inhabitant of Nazareth, in this context Christian). It is being painted to the doors of the Christian homes in Mosul. It means they have been given an ultimatum to leave, pay a heavy tax, convert or die.

Ricky is another member who is fluent in English. This allows him to translate Father Jacky's speeches to the young members at Oratorio. He mostly listens to Western popular music, including Rap and electronic music. He came by himself from Dhook, which is in northern Iraq in September 2013. His parents still live in Dhook, his brother lives in Erbil, and some of his relatives recently left Mosul because of the threat of the IS.

Music has a great importance in his life; he is always listening to music on his smart phone and has a diverse playlist that includes popular and traditional music in English, Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish, and, Christian<sup>69</sup> languages. In addition, he plays the guitar. However, during my field research he did not have a guitar to play. It was after having stayed in Istanbul for a year was he able to find a guitar.

Ricky is quite popular among young Chaldeans in Istanbul, likely because of his ability to help some of the community organizations with his English, which allows him to do tasks such as translate Father Jacky. He is also a talented theater actor, and just as he did in Iraq, he conducts small theater plays and is an amateur actor at Oratorio from time to time. One of the plays he directed is mentioned in Chapter II. But the most important qualification of Ricky is his skill as a Rap music performer.

The song he performed at Oratorio at a weekly Saturday gathering epitomizes the issue of a multi-dimensional identity for these young people and how it is expressed in music (see DVD, Track 21<sup>70</sup>).

The song consists of four sections in the four different languages he speaks; respectively Arabic, English, "Christian," and Kurdish.

He explains the meaning of the song in English as:

On first part I am talking about terrorist in my country and they don't know nothing except killing people and how r [are] they in darkness. [The] Second part is [about] how I go to another country and I became stranger and foreigner. [The] third part I am explaining the same thing [to] be [a] stranger but in Assyrian and saying how we have to fight for our country. The last part is [in] Kurdish and I am saying how my mother - was saying [yo]u left us [yo]u go [went] and how much I miss [her] here. (Ricky, September 9, 2014).

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<sup>69</sup> As an Assyrian member, he prefers to refer to the Assyrian and Chaldean languages as "Christian."

<sup>70</sup> This version is not from the Carnival, it was recorded at Oratorio in November 11, 2014.

Taking into consideration the content of the lyrics, the languages he chooses and the order in which he uses them is remarkable. The first part, in Arabic, is a narrative of the current situation of the country. The second one, in English, is on the general situation of an Assyrian refugee. It is also the part in which he expresses his anger at the current global situation.

In the third part, he uses Assyrian to call his people. And the last part is in Kurdish, because it is about his family, who lives in the Kurdish region. (August 9, 2014).

#### **5.4 The Identity to show to the “Others”**

In my early visits to the weekly gatherings at the Oratorio, my initial impression was that these young people strictly adhered to their Middle Eastern and Chaldean identities and traditions. Because the only music I heard them listen to was music from their region, in my first reports for this dissertation I wrote these sentences:

Even though the use of electronic keyboards in the church and the resemblance of the newly composed hymns to popular music of the region could seem as effects from their surroundings, these are not the results of migration, but of a modernization process which started long before the migration. It is more or less the same for the personal listening habits of the young migrants who often share Turkish and on occasion western popular music on their Facebook pages. It is also significant that when these young members get together for community gatherings and other celebrations, there is always music there, but the playlists do not include any genres other than Chaldean, Arabic, or Kurdish music from their region. Thus, it can be considered that, in the musical context, their self-representation as an individual or as a community member does not function along the same line.

But my ongoing research showed that these early statements were only the results of my limited observations. In the course of my field research I realized that the music they listen to at these gatherings is not limited to the music from the Middle East. They were listening to the popular songs from the US and Turkey as well. When I heard Turkish popular music for the first time in a gathering at Oratorio, I asked Farah that if they listened to Turkish music here frequently. She replied by saying that she could play some Arabic music for me. Suddenly I realized that in my previous visits she was the one who set the playlist and she was playing music from the Middle East because of my presence at the place as “a Turkish researcher who was there to hear Arabic music!”

Even though my following observations showed that my first impression about the

listening practices were wrong, I believe that my misunderstanding still points to a very important issue about self-representation: It clearly shows the role of the other in self-representation processes.

Adelaide Reyes (1999), in her book on the musical practices of Vietnamese refugees in multi-stage phases of their migration, asserts a similar dichotomy between the presentations of a cultural performance to the community versus the others. She states that Vietnamese refugees perform a more Westernized music in public area in the US, but contrary, they prefer traditional forms for the in-community gatherings. Even though the given position to the “traditional” one is different in the cases of Vietnamese refugees in the US and the Chaldeans in Istanbul, both cases show the need and the ability of the communities to express the chosen aspects of identity regarding others’ perception about them.

## **5.5 Folk Music and Dance**

While young Chaldeans prefer to listen to popular music, they prefer to sing Iraqi traditional songs. Even though Arabic songs dominate this repertoire, it also includes songs in the Chaldean and Kurdish languages as well. This repertoire covers folk and urban folk styles, which are frequently performed in a modern style.<sup>71</sup> Besides that, some of the examples to which I refer are in a more “authentic” style.

This urban folk music repertoire is mainly favored for community events such as wedding and engagement ceremonies in which people of all ages participate. For example, the repertoire of the well-known Chaldean performer Janan Sawa, who sings folk/urban folk/*arabesk* styles, is both in Chaldean and in Arabic. He notes that Turkish music has an especially great impact on his music. In this respect, Sawa is one of the favorite singers of transnational Chaldean community, and he is invited to community events around the world (see the previous chapter).

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<sup>71</sup> Ethnomusicologist Jane Sugarman (2004), defines this (urban) musical style as “modern but not Western” (p. 32).

### 5.5.1 Folk dance

Music, dance, and other cultural forms have important functions as markers of group identity, and therefore ethnic uniqueness (Lundberg, 2010 p. 31), folk music and dance being most useful means. Even though folk music does not carry its “original” meaning of being the product of “folk” in daily life in any given situation, its strong reference to the collective identity makes it a useful means both for the sovereign and the rebel. On one hand, folk music and dances are used in the creation of a national identity during the foundation processes of nation-states. For instance, governments have made selected folk music an ordinary element of education, public entertainment, and other nationalistic aspects of life. On the other hand, people can use collective dance as a tool of resistance against hegemony (See Hongur, 2014).

It is also very common for migrant communities to emphasize their cultural uniqueness via folk dances as an attempt to protect their cultural identity (Özbilgin, 2010; Aken, 2006). Aken, in his article on the role of *dabkeh* as an identity marker in Palestinian migrant communities in Jordan, states that, “[T]he agency of the body and embodied identities in music and dance have become highly political in displacement” (p. 203).

Songs for dances, usually line dances, that young members of the Chaldean migrant community in Istanbul listen to are among more “authentic” ones I mention above, and they come from various Iraqi towns in which Chaldeans live. Of course, they not only listen, but also dance to the pieces actively during almost all of the gatherings that include music, such as weddings and parties.

In the weekly gatherings at Oratorio, young members dance together at the end of the gathering without exception. After numerous activities and games that they play in separate groups, towards the end of the evening, usually a couple of young male members start dancing and the line lengthens with the participation of the other male and female members.

Among the most commonly performed dances at these gatherings are Chaldean-

Assyrian folk dances such as *golbareh* (or *goobareh*), *khigga* or fast *khigga*, *sheikhani*,<sup>72</sup> and the others. The performance of young migrants on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014, includes two of these dances *tout de suite*.<sup>73</sup> (See DVD, Track 22)

Even though these dances originated in different regions of Iraq, and some of them are attributed to other ethnic groups, they refer to a collective cultural universe of Chaldean, Assyrian, Kurdish, and Armenian people, especially those living in northern Iraq.

As Flona says, originally they were only dancing these dances in wedding ceremonies in Iraq, not at every occasion as they do here (November 2, 2012)<sup>74</sup>. As I have discussed in Chapter II in other cultural aspects, the migratory experience has a potential to change the given meaning of various concepts, including the musical products associated with home (Landau, 2011, p. 39). In other words, during the course of the migration, people bring their music with them, but the meaning of the music frequently changes (Lundberg, 2010, p. 35). In the case of migration, we can understand each musical practice in the particular situation in which it operates. In this respect, considering it takes place at the end of the gathering, this performance has a great significance in terms of touching the heart of the in-group solidarity and, consciously or not, they maintain and protect their culture in this transit phase of their migration. I have stated in previous chapters that transit migrants, unlike the settled ones, constitute a very small community that have limited facilities to maintain their cultural activities. Thus, every single attempt to sustain cultural activities, even by slightly changing them, has great importance for the continuity of culture.

In addition, I consider the folk dance performances that all members join without considering the type of dance and its origin to help to make the local differences among the Chaldeans who came from different regions of Iraq invisible.

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<sup>72</sup> For detailed information on Chaldean-Assyrian dances, see the article “Thirty Assyrian Folk Dances” of Peter Pnuel NetBasoo (Url-27).

<sup>73</sup> In order to confirm the styles of the dances, I used an analysis methodology, “feedback interview,”<sup>73</sup> by sending my video recordings to Flona, who recently relocated to Australia, and I received detailed information on each dance video and discussed its meaning.

<sup>74</sup> Similarly one of the videos of Janan Sawa mentioned in Chapter V (Url-21) shows that the line dances are performed in an ordinary community gathering -in valentine day- by the migrant community in Arizona.

### **5.5.2 Folk music in the other languages**

Besides the Arabic and Chaldean, the main languages the community uses, it is not uncommon for them to listen to and sing in Kurdish. Besides the necessity of singing in Kurdish by or for the Armenian members of the community, as I mentioned above, Chaldean people, especially who live in the northern Iraq, appreciate Kurdish music by listening to it and dancing Kurdish dances, therefore considering them as a part of a shared regional culture.

Even though it is their homeland, Christian people constitute a minority in the Kurdish region of the northern Iraq. Thus, speaking Kurdish is a necessity for maintaining social and economic life of the Christian inhabitants of the region. Chaldean migrants from this region say that living in Kurdish autonomous region provides them with protection, but it forces them face another assimilation process. But despite these concerns, inhabiting at the same neighborhoods as the Kurdish and Chaldean communities obviously creates strong links and allows them to share some cultural commonalities.

The first occasion in which I witnessed of this collectivity and the usage of Kurdish language by Chaldeans was again a weekly gathering at Oratorio. Following some songs in the Arabic and Chaldean languages, Farah, who was sitting near the computer, chose a Kurdish popular song from a ready playlist. It was shocking for me to observe that many of the participants directed their attention to the music and started to sing. Once it finished, they insisted to for it to be played again. It was a love song (Hêdî Hêdî /Quite Quite) of the Kurdish-Iraqi singer Karwan Kamil, who is a well-known young performer from the region. At that moment, I realized that almost all participants of the gathering who came from the Chaldean neighborhoods in the northern Iraq were also Kurdish speakers, and their appreciation of the Kurdish music, as demonstrated in the case of song contest above, was clear.





## **6. CONCLUSION**

Musical practices are among the most basic forms of human expression to reflect and create multiple meanings in life experiences, migration included. In this respect, the Chaldean-Iraqi community in Istanbul, as a transit migrant community, utilizes music in various aspects of their daily life during this period of their lives.

The specific characteristics of transit migration, such as temporality, uncertainty, and limited cultural and economical activity, radically effects the daily life of migrants including their musical activities. Thus, examining the musical practices of the Chaldean-Iraqi community not only reveals the role of music in the daily life of this particular community during this specific time period, but also allows for a comparison between the use of music in permanent and temporary migratory experiences.

Musical practices can be both the tools of expression and results of various human actions and experiences. In this study, I examine the processes of incorporation, self-expression of identity, creating economic and/or hierarchical relationships, and strengthening group identity in relation to the Chaldean-Iraqi community in Istanbul. Since music is a tool used almost democratically by the all members of the community, this study considers both professional and amateur performers in the same manner. Keeping in mind that the actors of these musical activities are not only the people who perform, but also listen to music, it focuses on the musical practices of both performers and listeners. Lastly, in order to understand various aspects of the life of migrants, both religious and secular, musical activities are examined.

Examining religious musical practices firstly provides an understanding of the role of religious networks in the daily life of the community. As the previous sociological studies put forward, the Chaldean-Iraqi community is considered to be a religious minority both in Iraq and in Istanbul in that, religious beliefs and practices maintain a significant place in community members' daily lives. Adding to that, the trauma that war and displacement cause usually directs people to renew their religiosity. In this

respect, getting in touch with a Chaldean church or the other religious organizations is a necessity for the new migrants of the community. In this process, music can help people incorporate themselves into the Iraqi migrant networks, including religious ones that the former migrants from the same region constitute. The case of three sisters, Flona, Farah, and Manuela, who have significant knowledge on the religious repertoire and have the musical talent to perform this, exemplify the importance of these abilities for a quick acceptance by the community. Similarly a keyboard player, Jan, who has a comprehensive knowledge on the repertoire, easily gained a high status among the young members. In these cases, musical abilities operate as a cultural capital in a Bourdieuan conceptualization; a migrant, who has already lost her social capital because of the mobility, can get a high position in the social network of her new community through these abilities. Moreover, this cultural capital has a potential to transform into social and economic capital. The case of two professional musicians, Sadeer and Stewart, earning their livelihood by performing Arabic music for the Middle Eastern tourists at a restaurant in Taksim exemplifies the latter.

Observations of the church choir also reveal the role of music in creating hierarchical relationships between young members. Even though they all are amateurs in music, musical abilities, including the knowledge of the repertoire, has great importance in this respect. The knowledge of the religious repertoire does not only refer to remembering the melodies of the hymns or having a notebook that includes all of the lyrics, but also the insight on the requirements of the rituals. The advantages of having these abilities are more pronounced in a transit migrant community than any other migratory experience. In contrast to the settled migrant communities, which have a bigger population and institutionalized organizations, the possession of these abilities is more crucial in order to maintain religious rituals in a transit country. Considering the key importance of healing after a socio-psychological trauma that war and displacement cause, the need for maintaining cultural and religious rituals can be more easily understood.

Maintaining religious rituals also helps hold the community together in this transit period. Both the homeland and the destination point provide an opportunity of settlement for the migrant in which she can be surrounded by family members and relatives. But in the transit phase, families and rarely individuals from different

regions of Iraq create new, temporary, and sometimes unsecured, social relationships. Moreover, because of the lack of legal permission to work in this transit phase, economic status is turned upside-down and daily life is completely changed.

Hence, the continuity of religious rituals gains a critical importance for the community in order to maintain some semblance of stability. In this respect, providing a constant choir performance at the church can be more important than the quality of the performance.

With this in mind, my presence at the field as a violin performer who accompany to the church choir is worth discussing. It is clear that my accompaniment to the church choir as a person foreign to the culture and the musical tradition did not produce “ideal” outcomes. However, the community members insisted that I perform with them.

My attendance in the field as a participant inevitably had an effect on my data. In this respect, while both performing at the religious services and analyzing the data I had collected, I considered my participation in a self-reflexive context.

While examining the effects of migration on the cultural products, I focused on the permanent migrant groups, as migration studies in culture mostly seek to understand cultural change and preservation, as well as the newly created forms, which are mostly hybrid. But having a short time frame and limited materials to create a radical change or create new forms in transit migration, change and creation are not main concerns for the community members. Additionally, it should be noted that the process of changing cultural products, such as musical genres, forms, or styles, could be started long before the migration by using various parameters, such as globalization.

The tendency of preserving culture is considered to be one of the most predictable behaviors of diaspora communities. Moreover “preserving the culture” is not always a conscious effort. However, according to my long-term field research, I do not think that preservation is a central issue for the Chaldean-Iraqi community in Istanbul. I believe that the main motivation for the community, consciously or unconsciously, is not preserving the culture as a frozen entity. Rather, Comprehending that the culture

is dynamic and open to change, maintaining their cultural/religious ritual is a more significant attempt for the community.

In this context, the change occurs in two ways: first, in a continuum with the globalization process that has started long ago in the homeland, and second, it can be seen as the result of practical necessity in the process of maintaining cultural practices. The temporality and the limited facilities of the transit period drive people to find *ad hoc* solutions. The use of a musician who is foreign to the culture, in this case me, could be understood in this manner.

If we consider the issue of change in the religious repertoire performed in Istanbul itself, we see that, because of the choir members are coming from different regions of Iraq and therefore not always having a common set of known hymns, the repertoire becomes smaller. Similarly, singing style is not diversified, but rather standardized or is dominated by some more talented or knowledgeable members.

As I have mentioned above, the change is not just driven by the migration. The hymn examples accessible on the Internet show that as a result of a long Westernization and modernization process in many Middle Eastern countries, in general the instruments and the arrangements of the religious songs in Chaldean culture are far away from the “authentic” styles. My observations showed that the Chaldean-Iraqi community is aware of the dynamism that is intrinsic to the concept of tradition, and thus, this change does not cause any apprehension for the community. In addition, the community members in the homeland continue to create new religious hymns that the community readily accepts. The use of modernized elements is also acceptable in those examples. In some cases, these newly composed hymns are based on popular songs from other Middle Eastern countries. Besides the Lebanese ones, examples of Turkish popular music are commonly found. In some cases, another noteworthy innovative feature is newly written lyrics, which are about the current situation in the country.

On one hand, the acceptance and performance of these newly composed hymns by my focus group can be considered to be a result of the need to keep continuing the religious tradition, especially while being away from the homeland. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning because of the position of the Chaldean-Iraqi community as a mediator between the homeland and the Chaldean-Turkish community. The Chaldean-Turkish community constitutes a smaller community

compared to Iraq, both in Istanbul and in Turkey in general. Even though it is a part of a wider global Chaldean diaspora network, because of its small size, it does not have some capabilities that larger communities do, such as having a church choir. Even though it is a migrant community, the Chaldean-Iraqi community has a bigger congregation and a choir. The choir is invited to perform for specific events at the Chaldean-Turkish church. These performances get the Chaldean-Turkish church and community up to date, and bring it religious refreshment in a sense.

The community does not use the religious hymns in only religious contexts and circumstances. The effects of displacement, the difficulties of the unsettlement in the transit phase of their migration, and the constant information flow about the bitter condition that war and a constant violation of human rights has caused in the homeland makes prayers and religious hymns a part of daily life. Thus, singing the hymns in daily life or sharing them on the Internet is among the daily musical practices for the community members.

Apart from the religious musical practices, listening and performing, mostly singing, music is an important musical activity, especially for young members. Weekly youth gatherings at Oratorio and various community events, such as weddings, engagements, birthday parties, Christmas and Easter celebrations, et cetera are the main musical events that fill daily life of young members.

The variety of listening preferences of the young members of the community shows the connections that they create between different musical traditions and their multiple identities as Chaldean, Assyrian-Chaldean, Iraqi, Chaldean-Iraqi, Arab, Christian, Middle Eastern, migrant, and young people. Music is not only a ready means for the self-representation of ethnic communities, it also carries “emotional connotations and can be used to assert and negotiate identity in a particularly powerful manner” (Landau, 2011, p. 39). Considering the dynamism of identity and its multi-dimensionality that allow individuals to represent herself by emphasizing any aspect of it, we can assume that while listening music, these young members emphasize one or more of these aspects.

Among the listening preferences of the young Chaldean-Iraqis, Western popular music and its equivalents in Middle Eastern countries have a significant place. In this respect, Turkish popular music is one of the most preferred musical genres. It should be noted that the cultural and economic relationships, which include musical ones,

between Anatolia and the other Middle Eastern regions could be traced back hundreds of years. But during the transit in Turkey, the interest in Turkish musical genres increased and became permanent in the following years. Among the other musical genres these young people listen to are more traditional folk and urban folk songs from the region. Even though this study focuses on the listening patterns of young members, it should be noted that age could be seen as an axis on which listening preferences can be seen. It is possible to say that while young generation shows interest in the contemporary musical products, the older generation prefers traditional songs, especially ones that evoke or reflect their feelings about their past experiences in the homeland.

As identity is formed in reciprocity with the other, it can also be expressed differently based on one's surroundings. Hence, the Chaldean-Iraqi youth perform different aspects of their identities through music in various circumstances.

Because of the small size of the community in Istanbul, it is rare for them to have professional musicians. Even though there are some amateur musicians in the community, the difficulty of bringing musical instruments during migration makes it difficult to have live instrumental performances. In such a circumstances, recorded music and DJ performances have a critical role for the community. The community asks the Chaldean-Iraqi DJs to perform in special community events, such as weddings and the other parties. These DJs play a repertoire that mostly includes traditional songs that community members from the all generations enjoy. The repertoire that DJs play, on the other hand, includes popular songs the young people enjoy. But as might be expected, there is no constant presence of the Chaldean-Iraqi DJs in Istanbul. At times when there is no DJ available, the community members use the playlists that Chaldean-Iraqi DJs leave for them or they hire professional Turkish DJs. But neither the former nor the latter solutions satisfy them.

While examining listening practices of the young members, it is necessary to consider that there is a wider Chaldean diaspora around the world, and all the Chaldean communities are connected each other in various economic and social ties, including kinship. The interconnectedness between the Iraqi-Chaldean communities can be seen in the sharing of musical products, too.

In terms of listening and sharing music, technology and facilities such as smart phones, tablets, computers, the Internet, and satellite receivers, provide countless

opportunities for the youth. With these devices and facilities, the young members are in constant contact with their coevals around the world. This includes their friends and family, in other words, the Chaldean diaspora spreads across borders and inhabits many other countries.

The sharing of music among these transnational communities mainly occurs in two ways. First and most commonly, young people share music on various websites and platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, and specific portals for Assyrian-Chaldean music. Second, numbers of musicians who have noteworthy recognition among Chaldean communities visit various countries and perform at community gatherings. These connections that are created through music not only constitute an aspect of the interconnectedness between those transnational communities, but also create those relationships socially, emotionally, and economically.

In regards to performances, the preferences of young members are more similar to the listening preferences of older generation. The young members usually prefer singing traditional songs from Iraq at community gatherings. Since the members who make solo vocal performances are young males, it is obvious that the gender roles, which give men more freedom in public sphere, in the community affect these musical practices. Many of these young men who perform at the gatherings hope to make a career in music in their destination countries with the help of musical networks including musicians, recording companies, and live music scenes, which are not available in the transit land but established in diaspora.

Adding to the musical genres, the themes of the songs that young members sing are also more similar to the listening preferences of the older generation. They usually choose sad songs as the expression of inner feelings about war, displacement, and longing. Considering the fact that these young people are hopeful for their future in the destination countries, which is promising in terms of continuing their education and having better living conditions, these performances are important to understand their deep and contradictory feelings in the transit land as a limbo between yesterday and tomorrow. Besides the songs that points to their state of mind, as a musical genre that is seen as a characteristic of migrant communities, rap music is among the most preferred genres in performance.

In the transit phase of their migration, the community lacks a suitable environment to foster their creativeness economically, technically, and socially. This fact constitutes

one of the most remarkable differences between the temporary and permanent migratory experiences. Even though they not create new and/or hybrid forms, they can produce both religious and secular musical products in the transit phase. Rap as a musical genre that based on lyrics is suitable for a performance without instrumental accompaniment. Besides that, it provides space for contribution of the others by clapping or beat boxing, making it collective experience. So that it is one of the most convenient genres to create new songs that tell the story of their journey and the ideas and feelings that accompany it.

Lastly, collective folk dance performances are common among the Chaldean-Iraqi migrants as it is among many other migrant communities as an attempt to protect their cultural identity. Almost every weekly gathering of the community at the Oratorio, as well as the other parties, ends with a line dance performance that strengthens the in-group solidarity. While these kinds of performances are unique to the wedding parties at the homeland, they are seen very frequent in transit land, as the community needs to keep fresh the solidarity.

Certainly there is a crucial difference between migrating as an individual or a community, both in terms of creating social interaction with the host community and the possibilities of maintaining and re-creating cultural identity (Kurtişoğlu, 2008, p. 16). Even though the Chaldean-Iraqi community is an example of the latter that seems to be a migratory experience that has relatively extended opportunities, the transit character of their migration changes its capabilities and decreases those opportunities in the transit land.

The findings of this study on the musical practices of the Chaldean-Iraqi community in Istanbul clearly show the temporary and uncertain character of the transit migrant experience, as well as the cultural, legal and economical limits it imposes. In this respect, almost all features of the musical practices I have handled can only be understood by taking into consideration these specific characteristics. But undoubtedly this study uniquely focuses on a particular community and the findings of it may not be applicable for all transit migrant communities. In a time period that human mobility, both forced and voluntary, reached such a huge extent in the entire region, this study aims to contribute to the literature of ethnomusicology as one of the early studies that uses a theoretical framework that transit migration studies in music requires.



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## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: A Case study: The Christmas Ceremony

APPENDIX B: Musical Transcriptions of Collected Hymns

APPENDIX C: List of Musical Examples on DVD

APPENDIX D: Pages from the Handwritten Notebooks



## **APPENDIX A: A Case study: The Christmas Ceremony**

The preparation for the special Christmas ceremony started weeks ago. Since the ceremony is very important to the members of the choir, they insisted that I accompany them. But since they think that accompaniment of a violin alone is not satisfactory for such an event, they asked François Yakan to hire a professional non-Christian keyboard player as well.

They chose the most proper hymns for the ceremony. Hymns were chosen according to the suitability of their content and meaning. This choice was made by some of the members of the choir who has a certain authority at the choir. They also agreed on singing some brand new hymns from Iraq.

### **A.1 Rehearsals**

In last two weeks before the ceremony, the choir divided the routine rehearsals into two sections; one was the preparation for the next weekly service, and the other was preparation for the Christmas ceremony. In the first rehearsals, the final repertoire of the ceremony was not yet determined, so we started with the decided ones. During the first rehearsal, I did not play, but instead recorded their singing in order to learn their style by listening. As they could not hire a keyboard player as they wish there was no other instrumentalist besides me. However, the choir was more crowded than usual. Young men who usually do not sing at weekly services wanted to perform for this special event. The voices of some male members, as tenors, have a different range than the others; so deciding on the keys was one of the main issues. Another problem of the choir was about singing in due time, singing together as a whole, and with the violin accompaniment. These are the only situations that I inferred during the rehearsals by necessity.

### **A.2 The Last Rehearsal for the Christmas Ceremony**

Following two rehearsals at the church, after the Sunday services, we made a last and long one at Oratorio on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013. It was a Saturday, thus they were there for their weekly gathering. We had decided to meet at 6.30pm, right after their English lesson at Oratorio. When I had arrived, they were playing various games including ping-pong, table soccer, and chess. Some of the

members welcomed me warmly. They were aware of my absence during the last two weeks then asked me why. Starting the rehearsal takes time because the choir members are all occupied with different activities. At the end, Flona called them to get together and we started our rehearsal at a classroom.

It was a quite long rehearsal, which takes one and a half hours. There were nine members besides me; five females, four males. I recorded all the rehearsals in order to study the hymns later. My recordings did not only serve as data for my research, but also I used them to remember and learn the hymns. We started with two hymns, which the choir had already agreed on before. I was familiar with these ones from the previous rehearsals, soon after they decided the key I started to play with them.

The first one was about the night the Christ was born (*milad*) and it had two sections, which were totally in contrast to each other in terms of the character. The second section says “when you see someone as your brother, then you are in milad / when you love someone for love, then you are in milad”. This section has a march character and spirit. They sang it antiphonally between a female and a male choir. But the first section certainly was not in the same character. The majority wanted to sing it with a spirit, too. While they were discussing the character, Farah put forward a totally opposite idea, stating that the first half must be gentler as to reveal the contrast between two sections. We also had to choose one of the sections as the instrumental introduction. I tried to be passive as possible as I could and did play the both versions in order to help them to decide. Since the majority preferred the lively section as the introduction and sang both sections lively; Farah was convinced. As some of the male members were singing in a higher register than the other members they also discussed the key. While sang without the violin accompaniment, each opening was in a different key depending on the leading singer herself. To solve the problem, I reminded them of the key that we played at the previous rehearsals, and then offered another fair, average one.

The second hymn (*Ya rou atan khaberuna*/ يا رعاة خبرونا) also had two sections, but it did not have the same degree of contrast. The same issues were on the table, but again not to the same extent. The lyrics were about three shepherds

who were commanded by an angel to visit the newborn Christ and to keep the boy warm with their livestock.

Thirdly, they sang a salaam hymn (*Shlama de marya*/ شلام دمرى) that I had not heard before and I learned it while they were singing. Right after I accompanied them on the violin, we quickly decided on the instrumental introduction.

The fourth one was another hymn that I had not heard before. Again it had two sections. The second one ended at the seventh degree of the scale, and the first started with the first degree (tonic). Thus it is sung as a chain without any break for an instrumental interlude. It was also a *maqam* based one.

The last two hymns that we practiced were for solo singing. Most of the members left the room and joined the others in the main hall. Manuela sang the first one (*Yer anum alatfal*/ ير نم الاطفال). This hymn was in Chaldean, as was the *Shlama* they sang. The content was the words of Mary to newborn Christ in Bethlehem. I was familiar with the hymn from the previous rehearsal, but I did not know the second section, and studied it by asking Manuela to repeat almost every single pattern several times.

Janan sang the last one. Janan speaks very little English and Turkish, so Flona stayed in the room to help us communicate. Even though it was not a new hymn for the Chaldean church repertoire, the choir members were not familiar with the hymn, and even Janan did not know all of the lyrics. In order to learn the music, I told him to not to care about the lyrics but try to sing the melody. He has an extraordinary voice and talent that allows him to sing in a very nuanced way, especially in terms of the microtonal ornamentations, which the *maqam* requires. I tried to play in the same manner, but since I did not have a modal music background, it was not easy for me. Despite their applauses, I was not sure that whether I could help him musically by accompanying; I did not want to overshadow this beautiful modal performance.

Just after we were done with the rehearsal, Janan started to sing in an unmetered folk song. It was an emotional Arabic song about homesickness. He told me about the lyrics, but I could already understand them because of the common words between the Arabic and Turkish languages. He wanted me to accompany him, and I tried to do. Then he sang another one with the same subject. Since I

also collect songs about displacement, I asked him if his parents sing similar songs at home. He told that, they make him sing songs on displacement, and while listening him, they usually weep.

The ceremony was three days later. Before I left, we decided to meet 30-45 minutes before the ceremony.

### **A.3 The Christmas Ceremony**

The Christmas ceremony was held on Christmas Eve, December 24<sup>th</sup>. It was Tuesday; ceremony started at 7 pm. As I was excited about the performance I texted Flona to ask if we could meet before the ceremony in order to rehearse. She was stuck in traffic and would possibly be late; the others were on their way to the church.

When I arrived at the church, there was a Turkish man in front of the entrance. He was likely a member of Turkish Chaldean community or a church officer. He was welcoming the congregation. If he was not familiar with the visitors, he kindly made them aware that it was a special event. But he did not prevent their entrance. Since I had invited a friend of mine to record the ceremony with a handy-cam, I was waiting in front of the entrance. The man asked me if the choir members had come yet in Turkish. I just realized that even though I did not know him, to my surprise he knew who I was.

When I entered the church, the acolytes were reciting a prayer antiphonally. There was still twenty minutes to the service, but the church was full. There were extra chairs as well. People were really very formally dressed. They were always well groomed when coming to the church, even at 8.30 on Sunday mornings. However, that day, there was definitely something special. Women had heavy make-up on, and children were wearing beautiful clothes. I saw Danyal, a young member of the community I knew from the gatherings at Oratorio. He was wearing denim jeans, but with his jacket and his stylish hair, he seemed quite chic. Danyal was excited I had arrived and told me that two of my “students” had just arrived. “Students!” This second shock gave me a new perception about my position there from their perspective.

When most of the choir members arrived, it was already 6.50 pm; we did not have time to practice. They had a short rehearsal on Sunday after the service, but

as I was not in the city, I could not attend. They told me that Manuela was sick that day, so she did not want to sing her solo hymn and they had already prepared another one. It was a brand new hymn from Iraq.

They went in to put on their ceremony costumes, which were blue aprons for women and white aprons for men. They were going to enter the hall behind the priest and walk through the podium behind him until the altar. I took my usual position on a chair next to the choir place and waited for their arrival. Two of the members were late; they would have to directly take their positions in the choir in their usual places.

The priest and the choir members entered the main hall while singing a *hallelujah*. An acolyte was walking with them while swinging a censer. I did not recognize the priest who conducted the service. Since it was a special service, the order of the mass was different, and it was longer than a usual one. The choir members had their booklets to follow the order. They recited some prayers antiphonally with the acolytes. I could recognize some of the prayers from the ordinary service, but the others were completely new to me.

The choir members were in contact with acolytes during the service. They also softly talked to each other to determine the order of the hymns. Flona wrote the lyrics of the new-hymn, which was to be played last. Jan Dark went to the back stage to bring two aprons for the late ones. Women dealt with all this organization and men seemed unconcerned about these details. They stood at the second row as usual. During the ceremony, they were attending the prayers, and if not, talking to each other. My position was also uncomfortable during the service because I never knew that when should I start to play. Amidst all this, I tried to ask the order of the hymns and other details. Because I did not easily remember the melodies of my instrumental introductions, I needed some time to check my notes and even practice by a soft pizzicato before starting to play. Before each service, I transcribed the hymns from the sound recordings of the previous rehearsal and took some notes. Otherwise, it was impossible to remember the hymns at the service immediately.

During the two hours service there were some small changes, but they/we all could handle them: First, the acolytes skipped the first hymn, so we postponed it to another part of the service. Despite her sickness, Manuela sang her hymn and

Janan sang another one (*Halum nusabih*/ هلم نسابح), which was about appraising God. I was informed about this change just a couple of minutes before he sang. They told me it was because he could not get the lyrics from the friends in Iraq. Flona asked me if I could accompany him. However, it was not easy to accompany a totally new piece for me, so I did not.

The other amendments were directly related to the musical performance: First, because of the cold, the tune of my violin went out. It was just around half step away but I had not realized it until I started to play. So after my introduction, they sang it in d sharp minor rather e minor. Besides, since my D and G strings went out of tune independently. After I realized it, I had to play it in D string only. The communion ceremony took time. Thus, the choir was supposed to sing various hymns during the communion. Since the congregation was more crowded than usual that day, they were supposed to sing more. During the communion, right after we finished with Manuela, they started another hymn, but I did not have time to turn the page that I took my notes on. Thus, I told them to start by themselves. I was aware that this was risky because they could change the key without meaning to, but I did not remember the introduction, and they wanted to start the new one immediately. As I foresaw that they were going to start to sing in a different key, I thought I could catch them in a couple of bars and accompany with some minor mistakes or gaps. They did not sing the newest one because they did not have a complete command of the lyrics.

They finished the service with a very lively hymn, which had some clapping parts. I was familiar with this one from the Eastern Holiday. Then they celebrated each others holiday and their friends came to celebrate theirs. At this moment, I realized the privilege that a choir member has because of her duty. During these greetings, they sang a very famous hymn together. It was the Arabic version of one that we knew as “Jingle Bells” (*Laylet 3eed*/ عيدي ليلية).

After the greetings, we discussed going to the central church for another service. The Chaldean-Turkish church had another Christmas service at 10pm, and the choir was invited to sing there, too. The male members of the choir did not want to go. Flona told that women could not go by themselves because if they did go, they would have to go back home very late and they needed a man to accompany them. Also, some of them were ill and decided to not to go. Then I left the group.



## APPENDIX B: Musical Transcriptions of Collected Hymns<sup>75</sup>



**Figure B.1 :** Salaam Hymn: Salamuka Dauman Taueetina (سلاامك ي دوم ت عطينا).



**Figure B.2 :** Salaam Hymn: Salamuka Dauman Taueetina (Scale).

<sup>75</sup> Notes on the transcriptions:

1. The transcriptions show the basic melodic lines of the collected hymns.
2. The scales (only the notes used in the melody) used in each hymns are shown on an extra line before each hymn.
3. Most of the transcriptions are made according to the exact pitch of the performance. However, in order to emphasis the *maqam* structure and the resemblance to Turkish *maqams*, some of them are made according to the tonic note of the corresponding *maqam*.
4. In the *maqam* theory of Arab world, the microtonal intervals are not equal to the *komas* in Turkish music. Thus, the notes, which are beyond equal temperament, are shown with small arrows below and under the notes.
5. Salaam Hymns are specific, mostly short hymns, which are sung during a particular section of Mass.



Figure B.3 : Salaam Hymn: Shlama (شلاما).



Figure B.4 : Salaam Hymn: Shlama (Scale).



Figure B.5 : Salaam Hymn: Shlama.

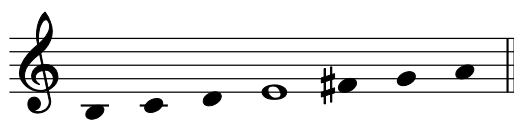
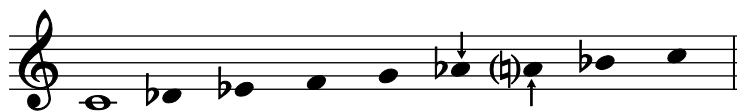


Figure B.6 : Salaam Hymn: Shlama (Scale).



**Figure B.7 : Salaam Hymn.**



**Figure B.8 : Salaam Hymn (Scale).**



**Figure B.9 : Hymn: Taalu Ilayya/Elaya.**



**Figure B.10 : Hymn: Taalu Ilayya/Elaya (Scale).**

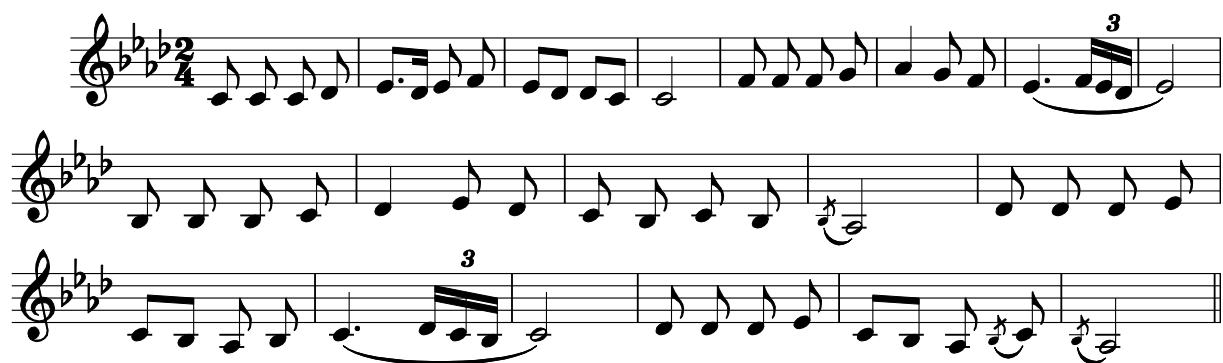


Figure B.11 : Hymn: Ya Hamal Allah El Mabduh El Hey.



Figure B.12 : Hymn: Ya Hamal Allah El Mabduh El Hey (Scale).



Figure B.13 : Hymn: Barken Omsalen (بركن ومصالن).

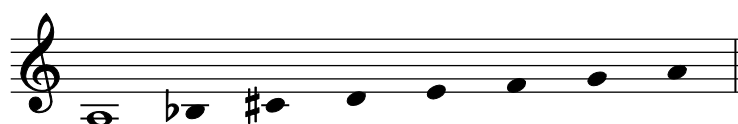


Figure B.14 : Hymn: Barken Omsalen (Scale).

Instrumental

Choir

Figure B.15 : Hymn: Ekbal Takal Matina (قبل اتقديمتنا).

Figure B.16: Hymn: Ekbal Takal Matina (Scale).

Instrumental

Choir

Figure B.17 : Hymn: Mushtaqina min Lebakh (مشتاقي من لباخ).

Figure B.18 : Hymn: Mushtaqina min Lebakh (Scale).



Figure B.19 : Hymn: Almadju (المجد لك).



Figure B.20 : Hymn: Almadju (Scale).



Figure B.21 : Hymn: Ehubuka rabi Yasuee (حباك اربي يسوع).

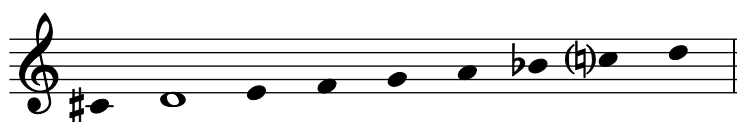


Figure B.22 : Hymn: Ehubuka rabi Yasuee (Scale).



Figure B.23 : Hymn: Shabhu bkali Malakhaye.



Figure B.24 : Hymn: Shabhu bkali Malakhaye (Scale).



Figure B.25 : Hymn: Adyo Yoma Ad Shlama.

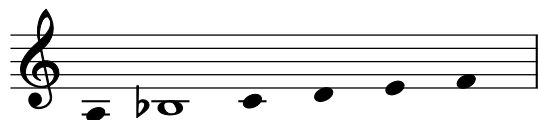


Figure B.26 : Hymn: Adyo Yoma Ad Shlama (Scale).



Figure B.27 : Hymn: Anta Hymnma Siwa.



Figure B.28 : Hymn: Anta Hymnma Siwa (Scale).



Figure B.29 : Hymn: Tu bu ela alrabi (توبو الى الرب).

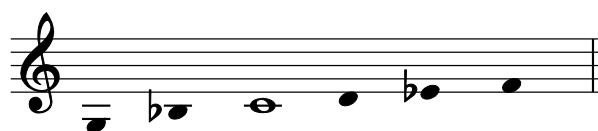


Figure B.30 : Hymn: Tu bu ela alrabi (Scale).





Figure B.31 : Hymn: 3aqimum Ya Allah.

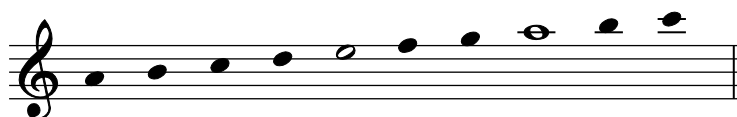


Figure B.32 : Hymn: 3aqimum Ya Allah (Scale).



Figure B.33 : Hymn: Maream bthulta (مريم بثولتا).

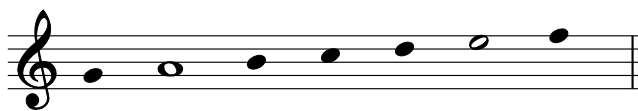


Figure B.34 : Hymn: Maream bthulta (Scale).



Figure B.35 : Hymn: Yeranum alatfal (يرنم الاطفال).

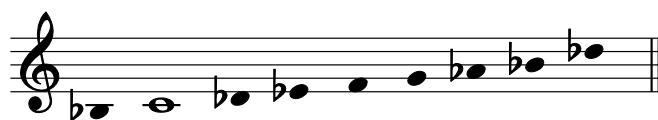


Figure B.36 : Hymn: Yeranum alatfal (Scale).



Figure B.37 : Hymn: Halleluia.



Figure B.38 : Hymn: Halleluia (Scale).



Figure B.39 : Hymn: Halleluia.



Figure B.40 : Hymn: Halleluia (Scale).

Instrumental

Choir

Women

Men

Figure B.41 : Hymn.



Figure B.42 : Hymn (Scale).



Figure B.43 : Hymn.

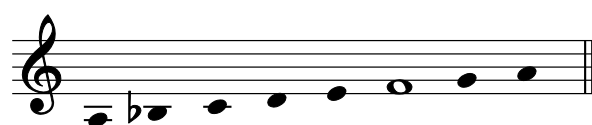


Figure B.44 : Hymn (Scale).



Figure B.45 : Hymn.



Figure B.46 : Hymn (Scale).



Figure B.47 : Hymn.



Figure B.48 : Hymn (Scale).



Figure B.49 : Hymn.



Figure B.50 : Hymn (Scale).



Figure B.51 : Hymn: Halleluia.

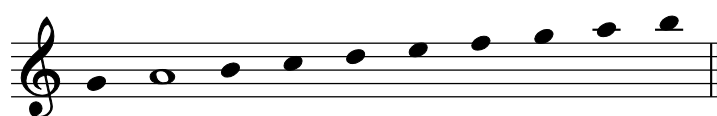


Figure B.52 : Hymn: Halleluia (Scale).



Figure B.53 : Hymn: Ya Tuana.

## APEENDIX C: List of Musical Examples on DVD

**Table C.1 : List of musical examples on DVD**

|    | <b>Name of the Song</b>                    | <b>Singer/Group</b>                            | <b>Record Source</b>                     | <b>Format</b> | <b>Page</b> |
|----|--|--|--|---------------|-------------|
| 1  | Hymn: Ekbal Takal Matina                   | Chalde n-Iraqi choir in Istanbul               | Field recording (6.10.2013, service)     | Mp3           | 62          |
| 2  | Hymn: Muṣṭaqina min Lebakh                 | Chaldean-Iraqi choir in Istanbul               | Field recording (6.10.2013, service)     | Mp3           | 67          |
| 3  | Your consent, O Creator-                   | Nizar Fares (Comp. Göksel Baktagir)            | YouTube <sup>76</sup>                    | Mp4           | 68          |
| 4  | Salwa newly composed hymn: Ya mshiha Marya | Salwa (her own voice)                          | Field recording (from another recording) | Mp3           | 69          |
| 5  | Hymn: Barken omsalen                       | Chaldean-Iraqi choir in Istanbul (Comp. Salwa) | Field recording (3.11.2013, rehearsal)   | Mp3           | 69          |
| 6  | Hymn: Yeranum alatfal                      | Chaldean-Iraqi choir in Istanbul               | Field recording (18.03.2012, service)    | Mp3           | 70          |
| 7  | Hymn: Emuna Maream                         |  | YouTube <sup>77</sup>                    | Mp4, video    | 72          |
| 8  | Hymn: Emuna Maream                         | Chaldean-Iraqi choir in Istanbul               | Field recording (17.08.2013, rehearsal)  | Mp3           | 72          |
| 9  | Live Khigga & Siskany                      | Janan Sawa                                     | YouTube <sup>78</sup>                    | Mp4, video    | 97          |
| 10 | Singing live at Nineveh Club Sydney        | Janan Sawa                                     | YouTube <sup>79</sup>                    | Mp4, video    | 97          |

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nm4bZW2G8E&feature=youtu.be>, date retrieved, 07.12.2014.

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5aYuAgD0Jo&list=PLCPJYnbdgPVPa4zFX79DIEf8Qe7KwAGf-&index=2>, date retrieved, 20.11.2014.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ShwfxCIc3Oc>, date retrieved, 06.12.2014.

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGDBTaoE47A>, date retrieved, 06.12.2014.

**Table C.1 (continued) : List of musical examples on DVD.**

|    |  |                            |  |               |     |
|----|--|----------------------------|--|---------------|-----|
| 11 | Janan Sawa<br>Valentine Party<br>Arizona       | Janan Sawa                 | YouTube <sup>80</sup>                        | Mp4,<br>video | 97  |
| 12 | Holy Spirit Rain<br>Down                       |                            | YouTube <sup>81</sup>                        | Mp4,<br>video | 102 |
| 13 | Song contest                                   | Masis                      | Field recording<br>(01.03.2014,<br>carnival) | Mp4,<br>video | 104 |
| 14 | Rap performance                                | Young Chaldean<br>migrants | Field recording<br>(01.03.2014,<br>carnival) | Mp4,<br>video | 104 |
| 15 | Performance in<br>Odakule, Beyoğlu<br>Istanbul | Yousif Ibrahim             | Field recording by<br>a community<br>member  | Mp4,<br>video | 106 |
| 16 | Perfromance in<br>Sydney                       | Yousif Ibrahim             | Field recording by<br>a community<br>member  | Mp4,<br>video | 107 |
| 17 | Performance in<br>Istanbul                     | Janan                      | Field recording by<br>a community<br>member  | Mp4,<br>video | 107 |
| 18 | Oh Immigrant                                   | Hatem Al Iraqi             | YouTube <sup>82</sup>                        | Mp4,<br>video | 107 |
| 19 | Taalu eleya                                    | Saleem                     | YouTube <sup>83</sup>                        | Mp4,<br>video | 109 |
| 20 | Ya mshiha Marya                                | Saleem                     | YouTube <sup>84</sup>                        | Mp4,<br>video | 109 |
| 21 | Ricky's rap song                               | Ricky and Martin           | Field recording<br>(11.11.2014,<br>Oratorio) | Mp4,<br>video | 110 |
| 22 | Line Dances                                    | Young Chaldean<br>migrants |  | Mp4,<br>video | 114 |

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<sup>80</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWJdBtfm0Dc>, date retrieved, 06.12.2014.

<sup>81</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-SI\\_HRWooA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-SI_HRWooA), date retrieved, 23.07.2014.

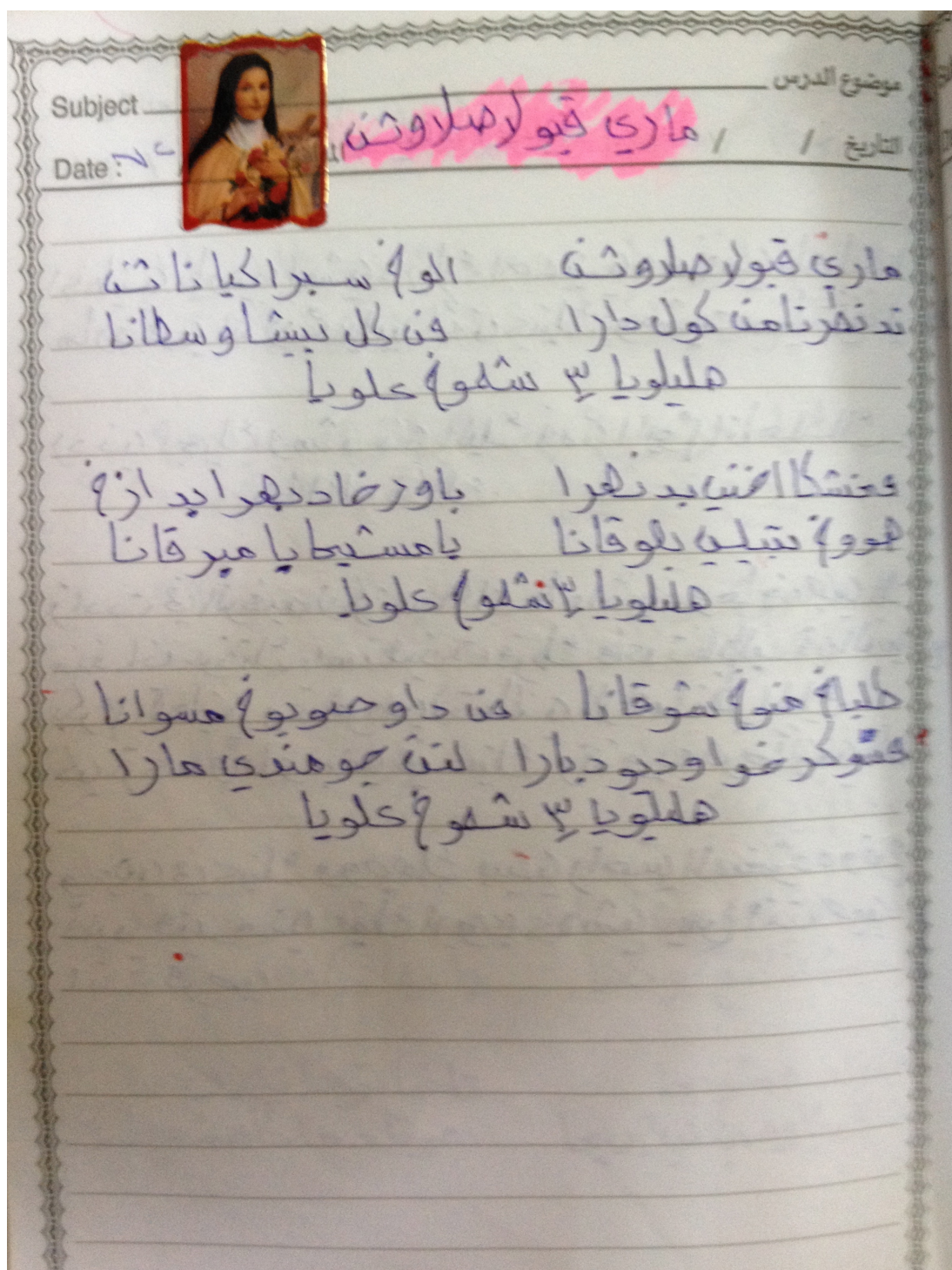
<sup>82</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXlmh4K9\\_MY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXlmh4K9_MY), date retrieved, 26.08.2014.

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1BXcooacIg>, date retrieved, 26.08.2014.

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pL77RLUO06s>, date retrieved, 26.08.2014.

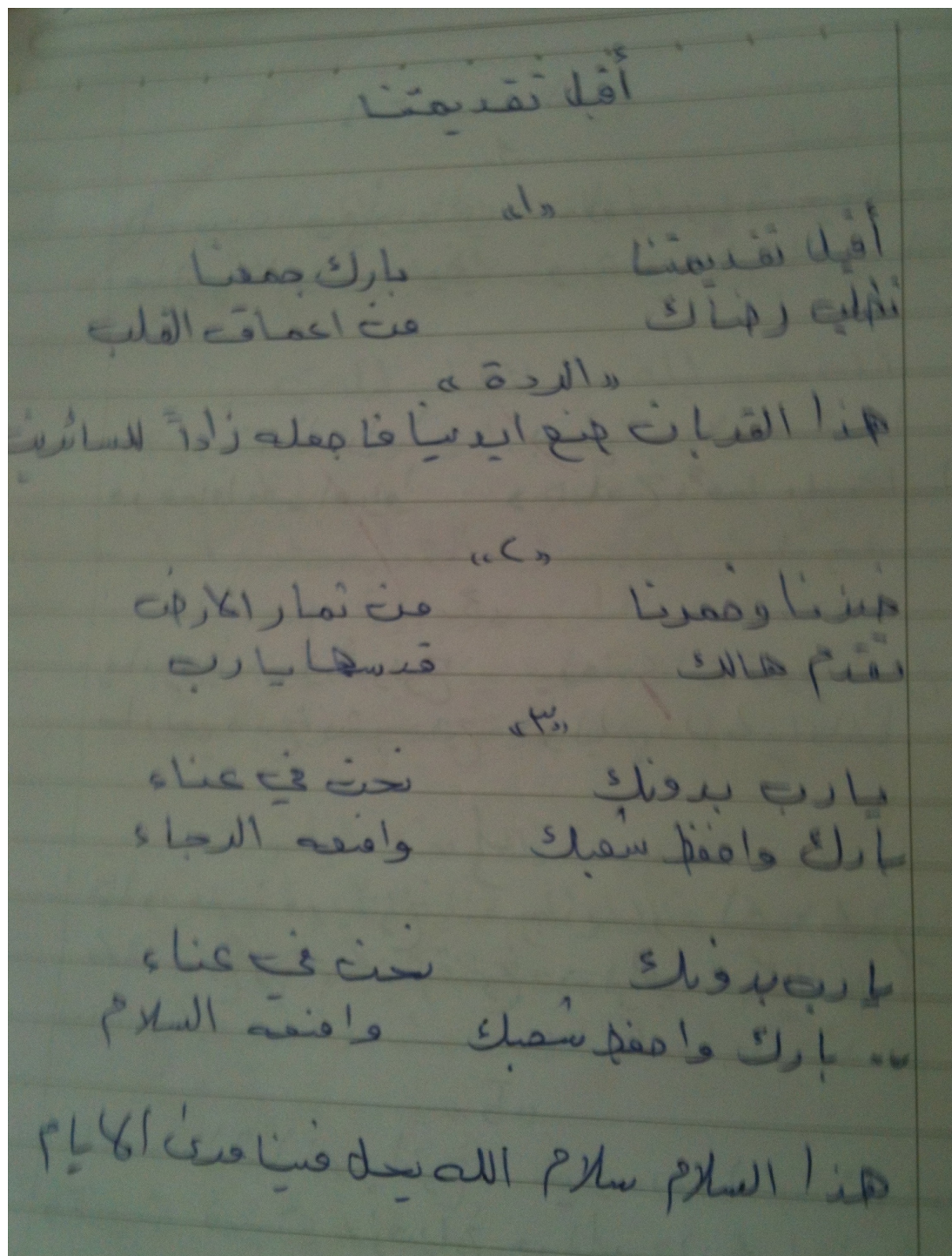


**APPEENDIX D: Pages from the Handwritten Hymn Books**



**Figure D.1** : A page from a handwritten hymn book.





**Figure C.2 :** A page from a handwritten hymn book.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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**Öğüt, E. H.,** 2013: Music in Limbo: The Musical Practices of the Chaldean-Iraqi Immigrant Community in Istanbul, *Fifth International Doctoral Workshop in Ethnomusicology*, 26-29 Haziran 2013. Hildesheim, Germany.

**Öğüt, E. H.,** 2014: Role of Music in Maintaining Social Ties Among the Chaldean Iraqi Communities. *Musicult'14/Music and Cultural Studies: On Local vs. Universal*. 5-16 Mayıs 2014. İstanbul, Turkey.